Visions for the Catholic School

Blueprints Reader
Volume I 1985

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Blueprints Reader, Volume I 1985

Alberta Catholic School Trustees' Association

Canadian Cataloguing in Publication Data

Main entry under title:

Visions for the Catholic school

(Blueprints reader, ISSN 0828-3834; v. 1)
Includes index.
Bibliography: p.
ISBN 0-88864-942-8

1. Catholic schools—Alberta—Addresses, essays, lectures. 2. Catholic Church—Education—Alberta—Addresses, essays, lectures. 3. Educational planning—Alberta—Addresses, essays, lectures. I. Alberta Catholic School Trustees' Association. II. University of Alberta. Faculty of Education. III. Series.
LC504.2.A4V57 1985 377'.827123 C85-091447-7

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Production and Design:
Publication Services, Faculty of Education
University of Alberta

Illustrations: Hank Zyp

Cover Illustration: Hank Zyp

Cover Design:
Instructional Technology Centre
University of Alberta

Reprographics:
University of Alberta Printing Services

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seeing the plank

God love us, not because we're good
But we're good because God loves us

Foreword

This small collection of essays is presented by the self-styled Blueprints Reader Committee.

The individual pieces cover material dealt with at Blueprints Conferences, and reworked by the original presenters or participants in light of subsequent experience and reflection.

The Reader Committee (to which all are welcome) came together in the fall of 1983 without official sponsorship, but simply as Blueprints people with a literary bent. They wanted to begin the important task of writing about Blueprints. They wanted to respond to the original Blueprints objective regarding production of literature about the Alberta Catholic school. They wanted to open the door for others to set down their considered thinking and experience of Blueprints.

This volume is modest in size, makes no grandiose claims and invites succession.

And what is Blueprints? It is the convenient nickname for a process begun in 1981 to "develop blueprints for the future mission and ministry of the Alberta Catholic school."

At the behest of the Alberta Catholic School Trustees' Association and the Alberta Bishops, 150 Catholic educators gathered for their first-ever conference on such a seminal topic. They were mostly school principals, self-evidently the leaders in the schools' daily life.

Conferences form only part of the Blueprints Process, however. They provide annual "refuelling" opportunities to sustain the real work going on at home all year long.

That work? To involve all members of the Alberta Catholic community in articulating this vision of the Catholic school; and to realize it concretely by employing tested management techniques of goal-setting, strategy selection and action planning.

The combination of thinking and doing is working for many Alberta Catholic educators. Both elements are sustained by the experience of sharing which Blueprints offers. People no longer feel alone with their questions, their aspirations, discouragements, successes. That reality—that we can indeed sustain each other—is one of the gifts of Blueprints.

Another is the impulse behind this volume, which comes to you with love and hope from its authors.

Acknowledgments

The Board of Directors of the Alberta Catholic School Trustees' Association is extremely pleased to lend its support to the efforts of the Blueprints Reader Committee by publishing their work of the past 18 months. We have followed the progress of this volunteer group of writers with interest and are delighted with the quality of this publication. This book contains the very best of contemporary thought on a range of subjects that are and will continue to be the central issues in Catholic education in this province and beyond. This publication serves as a beacon to those who lament the lack of Catholic school literature now available, and it is our hope that others will continue to take up the challenge of developing such literature. That we have such unselfish and high calibre talent within the Alberta Catholic education community is most gratifying. We thank those who contributed to the goals we all share.

First of all, our thanks go to Dr. Bob Carney who first identified the need for an Alberta Catholic school literature and to Ralph Himsl, Kevin McKinney and Ric Laplante who took up the challenge and gave it life.

We are grateful to all members of the project committee for giving up many of their Saturday mornings over the past year and a half; for without that sacrifice this book would not have been written. Our thanks to Ron Berger and John Burger, who worked on the committee but behind the scenes, offering the authors advice, critique and suggestions for editing. Also to former ACSTA administrative assistant, Brendan Wycks, for offering the work he accomplished toward his thesis to the committee. The quotes you see complementing the essay material come from his efforts.

Our deepest gratitude to Hank Zyp, who gave of his time and talent and whose delightful drawings illustrate the book.

Special thanks to Isobel Temple for her superb editing skills and insightful comments and to ACSTA administrative assistant Kate Dunbar for keeping everything flowing. Many thanks go to the staff of Publication Services, Faculty of Education, who typeset the book, offered advice on design and took it to the printers on time.

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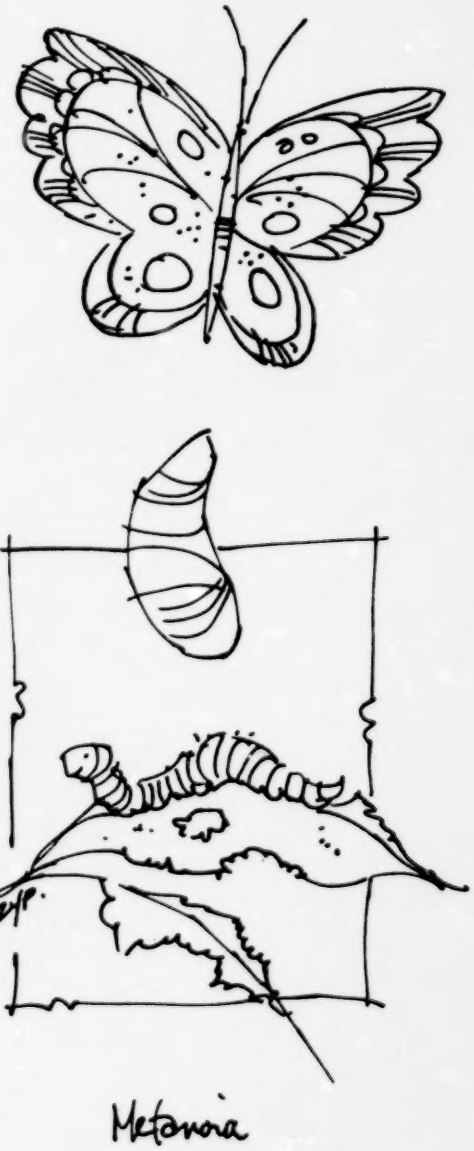
Invitation to Journey

Brady Long



For quite a while I have asked myself—*Why?* You might, as you read on, ask yourself the same question. But your *whys* will probably be different from mine. Yours might ask "Why read on?" They might turn into *whos*. Mine did, and resulted in a multitude of *whats* and *whens* and *wheres* and, for me, ultimately back to *why?*

A couple of years ago, I was introduced to a group of people in a project that I really did not understand; and one, in all truth, that did not touch me. It did not give me a *why*. Now, as I look back, a number of *whys* come to mind. Please allow me to share them with you.

Why did I drive 800 kilometers to sit in a room on a Saturday morning with people I did not know? Why drive 800 kilometers to listen to and to read essays by these people? Why was I interacting with these individuals whom I thought, at best, were conservative intellectuals? They were attempting to thrust upon me ideas and ideologies which could possibly destroy my preconceived notions of "academics." After 20 years of teaching, I was not at ease with these people who epitomized many of my dislikes because of their intellectual approach to the development of the child. *Why?*

During the first few sessions, there was a continual bombardment of words—to me sometimes meaningless and empty words. Ministry, ecumenism, identity, pluralism, roles, service, collegiality, pre- and post-Vatican II, Gospel story—the list was endless. But as these words were presented, they began to transform themselves into images and another word emerged—*hope!* But it still seemed meaningless and empty to me—not because of the nature of the words, but because of the method of delivery. These words were being transmitted on an intellectual plane but not necessarily on a plane of intelligence. I don't mean this personally. The problem lay not in the transmission but in the *who*—who was transmitting and who was the receiver? The former was a group of conservative intellectuals and the receiver was a 10-year-old boy.

This 10-year-old boy was raised in an educational setting that didn't have time for the *whos* and the *whys;* in their place were the *dos* and the *don'ts,* with greater emphasis being placed on the latter. Even though the intentions of the people responsible for the *dos* and *don'ts* could

If Blueprints is to be anything more than hollow words, then the teachers will have to be inspired to a level of charity (love) and prayer in their married or single lives which can be shared in the staff room and brought to students in the classroom.

Father Tom Mohan
Conference Participant

be considered by some to be saintly, the methodology was somewhere to the right of Sparta.

How did this 10-year-old react? Quite simply, he withdrew. He left the world of words, the world of rules, the world of external reality and he entered into the world of personal reality; a world that was not based upon words (books) but had its foundations on heroes and heroines, a wonderfully delightful world of make-believe reality. This 10-year-old had succeeded in overcoming the odds; and he became an intelligent illiterate. The world that he was in now was full of Gielguds, Oliviers, Brandos, Bogarts, Taylors, Hepburns, Robinsons; it was a world where the late night movies prevailed. It was the world of Henry V "closing up the wall with his English dead" ; Iago "struggling with his imperfect self," Rumplestiltskin "conjuring gold" and Marat realizing the poet in himself.

Thirty-three years have passed; again the 10-year-old finds himself in a milieu of words, and the emphasis is not now on the *do's* and *don'ts* but on the *whos* and *whys*. The *whos* and the *whys* are coming from people who in the beginning were faceless, storyless, journeyless. That was month one, but this 10-year-old is now entering month 18 and he is finally realizing that he had not been interacting with a group but with individual people who have faces, and stories, and who have journeyed on paths that he has not taken but paths that are now open to him because of words. Words which initially were empty are now rich with meaning. Why has he reached this conclusion only now? Is it because of the journeys that have been taken by those people, or is there more? Is it possible that, along with the journeys, they took risks similar to the risks he took?

T. S. Eliot said, "The wheel is still and is forever turning." The 10-year-old was the wheel and the words forced him to become still; but somewhere in that child the wheel continued to turn. The energy that caused the movement of the wheel was the spirit, the soul, the untouchable and, perhaps, the Christ in him. They could strap his hand, belittle him, but they could not touch or destroy his inner self. Words could not corrupt or destroy his make-believe real world. That same spirit, allowing him to continue on his journey, is found within the authors of the following articles. They too have journeyed and have taken risks—the greatest risk being the willingness to reveal themselves.

You, dear reader, won't have to drive 800 kilometers, but you will have to ask *why* and perhaps the 10-year-old in you will have the answer. As you read these articles, your journey will be much farther than 800 kilometers; it will be endless. This should create not fear, but hope in all of us.

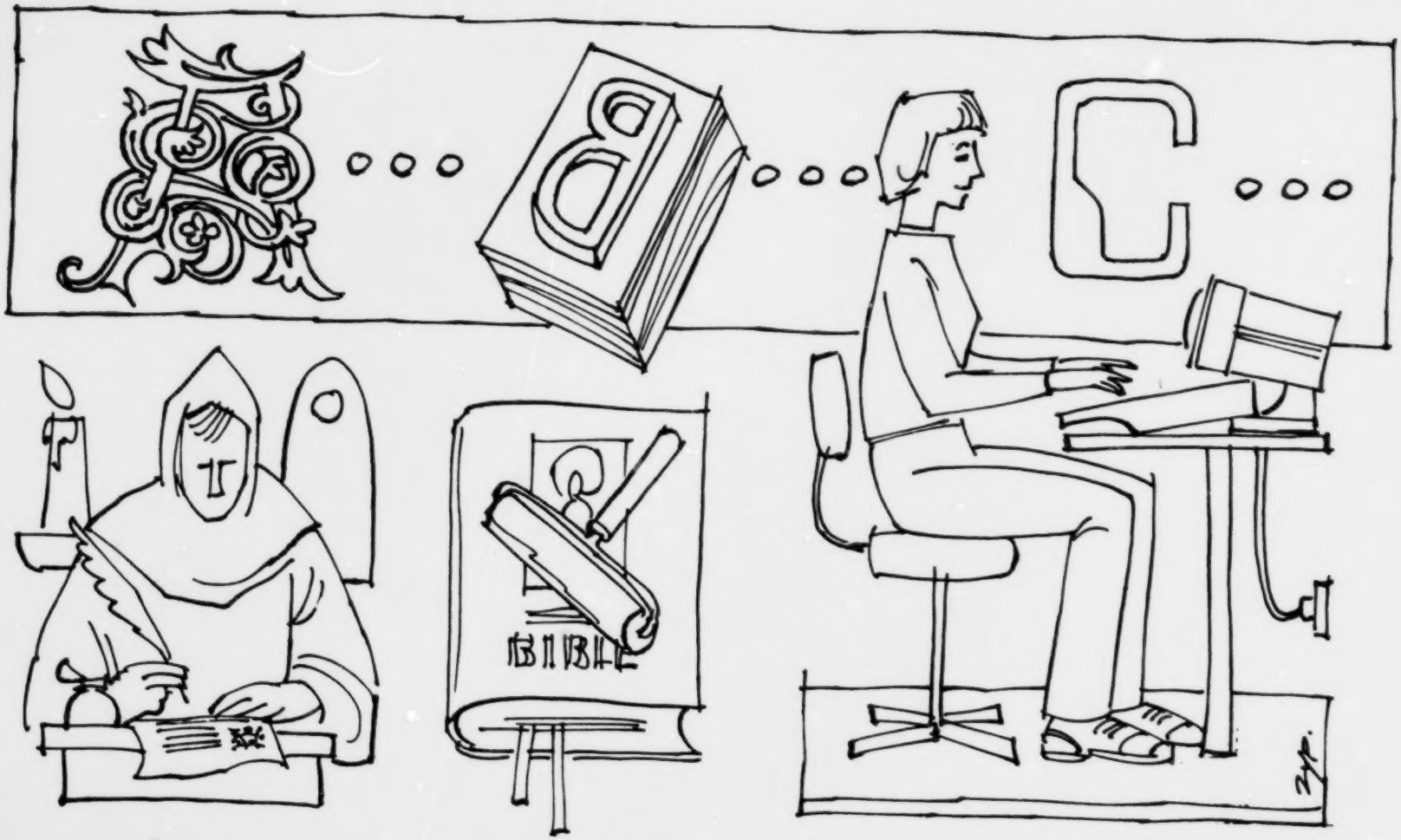
As you travel through the articles, a certain condition will have to be present in order to make your journey meaningful—vulnerability. You will have to allow yourself to become vulnerable in order for the words to become means and not ends unto themselves.

The choice is now yours—To hope or not to hope? To read or not to read? To enter into the world of your inner self and allow others the privilege and pleasure of seeing *you*, the child in all of us, or to look upon the articles as ends unto themselves and, in so doing, place them on a shelf where they will not interrupt or interfere with your life?

This 10-year-old has finally allowed the words to become part of him and is richer as a result. Thank you Ralph, Ric, Ron, John, Brendan, Dan, Bob, Kate, Bob, Barbara and Kevin and the hundreds of Blueprints participants. May this 10-year-old and the 10-year-old in all of you benefit from the journey you are about to begin.

The views expressed are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Alberta Catholic School Trustees' Association.

Essays



10th Century

15th Century

20th Century.

Our History, Our Future

Robert Carney

More and more is becoming known about Catholic schooling in Alberta. Catholic educators are discovering more about the origins and present character of their schools; they are constantly sorting the data coming to them from different directions. They are using new interpretations to understand for its own sake what happened in the past; and they are attempting to determine the significance past events may have for present and future practice.

There is no doubt that history must be studied if the objectives of Catholic education in the 1980s are to be met. To fulfill their mission to be transformers within the Catholic tradition, Catholic educators must know their heritage and its effects, especially as it has been traditionally manifested in these institutions known as Catholic schools.

This paper will focus on six major topics:

- The historiography of Catholic schooling;
- Mission school orientations;
- The dual system (the Quebec example);
- The evolution of the separate school;[1]
- Vatican II and Catholic schools;
- Catholic school futures.

A fundamental assumption of this paper is that the transforming objective will not likely be realized unless the historical experience is thoroughly analyzed. The discussion will attempt to determine if the topics above have major characteristics in common. Perhaps more importantly, it will try to identify what factors are central to the task of transformation,[2] a principal theme of Blueprints conferences.

The discussion will attempt to identify elements that have not been addressed adequately, or that have been ignored entirely, in many commentaries on Catholic schooling.

Historiography of Catholic Schooling in Alberta

Much that has been written on the history of Catholic schooling in Alberta and elsewhere in Canada has emphasized the legal and political aspects of the separate school question. Many of these accounts, such as Lupul's, depict the Catholic hierarchy as having been locked in battle with politicians and the public schools.

[1]Separate school: The second publicly funded school jurisdiction established by the Catholic or Protestant minority at the time of commencement in a specific area.

[2]Transformation: A term used by contemporary Catholic educators that suggests growth out of a traditional conserving role.

This literature ended by the 1960s and has since been replaced with commentaries on the implications of bilingual and multicultural education, in which religion is seldom given much attention. In the last several years in Alberta, academics and others have given increasing attention to the growth of private schools, Accelerated Christian and Holdeman Mennonite schools especially.

An implicit question in such studies involves the privileged position of Catholic schools vis-a-vis their level of public funding. It is likely, therefore, that Catholic school officials will be drawn into this controversy and that they will turn increasingly to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms to support their legal and historic position, in the same manner as they did in the past with respect to the British North America Act and related federal legislation.

Although some work has been done on the social control and social reproduction aspects of Catholic schooling (Porter's *Vertical Mosaic* comes to mind) little has been done on this subject in Alberta. Although Tkach's recent book *Alberta Catholic Schools: A Social History* (1984) does much to bring the study of Catholic education into the framework of social history, it does not address some of the questions commonly raised by Katz and other "radical revisionist"[1] historians. For example, it does not discuss the revisionist claim that public and separate schools have never been vehicles of social mobility.

It might be argued that Tkach's book passes over these revisionist preoccupations in order to demonstrate that Catholic schools have survived because they have been valued by their clientele. Catholics in Alberta tended to "believe" in Catholic schools because they were seen as having contributed in a significant way to a child's spiritual growth, to his/her material and social development, and to the well-being of the province generally. It is debatable whether this belief had any basis in fact. Whether the same outcomes would have occurred without publicly funded Catholic schools is a matter that needs further study.

Ramrattan's study of Catholic schooling in the Archdiocese of Edmonton from the 1880s to the 1960s indicates that the Catholic school ideology in Alberta was based almost entirely on a series of papal precepts on education. It contends that Catholics in Alberta, whether religious or lay, seldom produced original thinking on the nature or purpose of Catholic education. They supported Catholic schools because the hierarchy told them they should, they believed that Catholic schools were effective socializing agencies because they were told that they were, but they seldom asked for evidence from school officials that would have supported these contentions. In fact, Catholics seldom articulated doubts about the Catholic schooling enterprise during this period.

Some scholars have suggested that Catholic schools have persisted not for religious reasons, but rather because their legal and bureaucratic nature has made it difficult to

[1] Radical Revisionist. An historical interpretation of public and separate schooling in Canada which contends that these systems do little more than perpetuate existing social inequalities.

absorb them into a common system. Others have suggested that the outcomes of Catholic schooling, whether religious or secular, are not much different from public school outcomes. While the evidence in this regard is rather sketchy, studies such as Currie's raise fundamental questions that should not be ignored.

What can be gleaned from the historiography of Catholic schooling in Alberta? Cashman, in a history of Catholic schooling in Edmonton, indicated that although Catholics believed something desirable occurred in the Archdiocese's Catholic schools, "they have never been able to define or identify the outcomes—even remotely."

Mission School Orientations

This same phenomenon can be found in mission school orientations in Alberta's early history. There is little doubt that the Métis and some Native Indian groups were among the principal supporters and defenders of Catholic schools for much of the 19th century. Their loyalty helped make it possible for the church to obtain a dual school system in the Territories and to maintain a system of denominational Indian schools in the Prairies until the 1950s.

It would appear that Catholic missionaries succeeded in developing an educational system which was based on Native support and one that was subject to some Native control. One only has to read accounts by such Native spokespersons as Steinhauer and Dion to realize that a reciprocal relationship of trust and understanding developed between many Native people and Catholic missionaries—and that Native people were able to integrate the Christian story and practice into their traditional ways of living. The missionaries learned Native languages, camped and traveled with the hunters on the plains and in the forests. Lacombe developed an elaborate pictorial catechism; Taché praised the good nature and fidelity of the Métis; and Riel, preparing for battle at Batoche, insisted that the Faithful Companions of Jesus be given the best and safest house during the siege.

But the relationship gradually came to an end. The Métis and Indians became irrelevant, and while the missionaries stayed with them, Native people were abandoned by most white Catholics. By the 1950s many missionaries found themselves strangers in Native communities, and new Native spokespersons such as Manuel and Cardinal wrote bitterly of their Catholic school experiences. The elements that had held the two groups together had largely been put aside and forgotten. It is only recently that missionaries and Native people have begun to come together again. They are using a common story that contains elements of Christian and Native traditions. The nature of the dialogue has changed; the missionary of today is much more given to listening than to telling.

If one accepts that Catholics have had difficulty in defining the purpose and procedures of Catholic schooling, and if we agree that the missionaries and the Native people once had a workable method of understanding Christ's message, the question must be raised as to why such confusion and lack of understanding has prevailed.

The traditional model of church since Constantine, upward to God
down with the perfidious infidels. The sun and moon orbit around
the summit of this hierarchical structure. Truth and sanctity trickle down

Part of the answer lies in an examination of the 1884 School Ordinance and the subsequent evolution of separate schools.

The 1884 Ordinance – The Quebec Example

In 1884 the Territorial Government passed legislation which established in Alberta a system of schooling similar to that in the province of Quebec. The Catholic section of the Board of Education had extensive powers. It was responsible for teacher training, curriculum development, the selection of materials, and the appointment of inspectors. Notwithstanding such responsibilities, few steps were taken to make the Catholic system substantially different from its public counterpart.

One can only speculate as to what might have happened if Catholic school officials had worked to develop a unique system; it would undoubtedly have been different from that of Catholics in Quebec. But Catholic officials in the Territories showed little initiative in mapping out what should occur in their schools.

Had the dual arrangement continued, it might have prompted the Catholic section to develop an autonomous system. But the Catholic section's independence was soon reduced by a series of government enactments, and by 1901 Catholic schools were firmly under the direction of the Territorial Department of Education. The hopes for a separate system of Catholic teacher education were dashed, and plans for a distinctive Catholic curriculum were all but ended. This resulted in much bitterness and a tendency to do little to improve the situation until the lost rights of the 1884 legislation should be restored. Hence all the problems of the Catholic system—whether financial, curricular or staffing—were seen as having been caused by an indifferent, if not hostile, government.

Although Catholic schools continued to exist, most viewed them as being similar to their public counterparts. The system was held together by the efforts of religious communities and by the exhortations of the hierarchy who called upon Catholics not to waver in their support for Catholic schools. The Bishops made it plain that the Catholic system was essential, that it was generally effective, and that no substitute or alternative should be considered. There was a continuing sense of grievance on the part of Catholics concerning their schools but, characteristically, the locus of this unease was outside the Catholic community. It lay in concerns about inadequate funding, the secular nature of the prescribed curriculum—particularly the changes following the progressive reforms of the 1930s, and the apparent indifference of government and other educational agencies to meet the special needs of the separate system.

So preoccupied were Catholic educators with these matters that they were not given to examining the system as it was, or to discussing what it might become. Catholics, for the most part, were not given to instituting reforms on their own.

The Evolution of the Separate System

It was not until after the Second World War that Catholics began to develop structures to improve and extend the system of Catholic schools. Many new Catholic separate school districts were established in towns and rural areas. Catholic school districts in urban areas, Edmonton and Calgary especially, were faced with rising enrolments, and efforts were begun to overcome many of the "historic wrongs" which had been identified as hampering Catholic schools. Much attention was given to improving the financial status of Catholic schools. Questions of assessment, school boundaries and equalized government grants were major issues.

The Alberta Catholic Education Association was formed in 1947 as a lobby group and as an agency to inform the Catholic community (viewed as being somewhat lukewarm about Catholic schools) about the merits of the system. The ACEA lasted only until the early 1960s. According to Tkach (1984), one of its principals suggested that its demise was the consequence of a lack of "concrete substance" (p. 257). The Association's publications reveal that it seldom addressed such aspects of Catholic schooling as the needs of pupils, the lack of relevant materials, and the relationships between home, school and parish.

The ACEA was, however, clear about the ultimate aim of Catholic education: "The primary aim of education is so to form an individual that he will both be fitted and determined to strive constantly toward moral perfection unto the attainment of his eternal salvation" (p. 255). While the ACEA recognized secondary aims (the need of education for man's temporary vocation) and while it affirmed that Catholic schools "were free to take into account the economic, social, cultural and political conditions peculiar to their respective [areas]" (p. 256), it did not indicate how Catholic educators in Alberta might take these factors into account in planning and implementing school programs.

The isolated, aggrieved, and essentialist system of Catholic schools in the province was therefore ill prepared to address the challenges emanating from the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), or to meet the many social and economic changes that occurred in the province from the 1960s.

Vatican II and Catholic Schools

Catholics continued to depend upon papal pronouncements on education in the 1960s to explain and justify their system of schools. The *Declaration on Christian Education* and subsequent Vatican documents were studied by Catholic educators in the province and by members of the Alberta Catholic School Trustees' Association to find a rationale for the system, to institute new school practices, and to plan new directions. But when it came to determining how the principles outlined in the documents might apply to Alberta's system, trustees and others were hard pressed to come up with anything other than lists of questions and concerns. For example, the ACSTA Task Force Study of the Vatican document entitled *The Catholic School* included the following observations:

It has meant some tough slogging, but the yearly conferences and the revitalized people who have emerged from them have put in place a change process. It has been made to work, kept alive and moving ahead.

Ric Laplante
Blueprints Founder

Alberta lacks both a guiding statement and a common understanding of what it means to be a practising Catholic.

On the whole the Bishops do not speak out publicly on the importance of Catholic education.

The Church is going through a time of renewal and re-evaluation of its role in society. As a consequence, teachers and trustees are experiencing difficulty in presenting "The Christian Vision."

Some astute observers claim that they see little difference between Catholic and non-Catholic schools.

Up to the 1970s, statements such as these would have been considered disloyal, misinformed, or expressions of "lukewarm" Catholics. They are now viewed as not only being appropriate, but also as necessary preliminaries to the process of redefinition, reform, even radical change. Such observations undoubtedly had much to do with the holding of the first Blueprints Conference in 1981 and to the emphasis on transformation in the fourth Blueprints Conference in 1984.

There is now a sense of immediacy and a determination to come up with practical answers, an attention to what the ACEA would have termed "secondary or immediate aims." While relatively few Catholics are involved in Blueprints Conferences, this sustained exercise in defining the purposes of Catholic schools appears very promising, even though it may be difficult, frustrating and lonely at times.

Catholic School Futures

While the Blueprints dialogue is underway, Catholics are looking at a variety of school futures: greater diversity within the existing system of Catholic schools (academic, vernacular language, and small school programs); amalgamated schools (joint public and separate schools with optional religious studies courses); parish catechetical programs, and Catholic private schools such as Caritas in Edmonton.

None of these ventures has great promise because none really addresses the fundamental problems facing Catholic education in Alberta today. Changes that do not come to grips with the basic questions of Catholic educational theory and practice may be sustained for a while, but they are doomed to failure. It is not just the Center that needs to be defined: the story that surrounds it needs to be known and expressed. Without such a narrative the Center, the Sacred, will have little meaning.

It is apparent that we have not provided the story of who we are and who we might become, either to ourselves as teachers, parents, or trustees, or to our students. The matter involves both the content and context of our school programs, but with the possible exception of some religious studies courses, we have not provided the resources to our students to learn about and reflect upon where they have come from, who they are, and where they might be going.

Surely Catholicism in Alberta has sufficient roots for its culture, its character and traditions, to be identified and disseminated.

Having identified the character, traditions and development of Catholicism in Alberta, it should be possible to develop school programs in a manner that would not only lead the Catholic school community to know its special character and to pursue its special mission, but that would also provide the basis for each person within this community to develop his or her own story.

We have had sufficient experience in Alberta to develop a local history, and because of the experiences of Native people and of others who have come to the province in the last 200 years, a unique Catholic culture exists. The search for the Center of this culture and the story that surrounds it is the organizing principle that should shed light on everything we do. We can never be totally successful in our quest; we can, nonetheless, discover the Center even though we will never know it fully.

As Glassie says, "only in the discovery of a Centre is it possible for an ethic to be formulated and practised." He argues that all of our traditions, songs and stories, liturgies, symbols, artifacts and even the design of our houses and churches are sacramental. Like the Sacrament of the Eucharist, these traditions join the members of the community to the past, to their local heroes, ancestors and saints. They establish the present as valid and worthwhile; and they provide the link to and hope of the future. In the end, then, the Sacred Center provides a basis for both the ethical and the aesthetic.

The Protestant theologian, Langdon Gilkey, identifies five uniquely Catholic characteristics—an aggregate of traditions that should color and shape decisions about how the stock of knowledge of Catholicism ought to suffuse the Catholic school curriculum. Boys summarizes Gilkey's views as follows:

> First, a sense of peoplehood pervades Catholicism; it encompasses many races and cultures and fosters community rather than individualism;
>
> Secondly, it honors tradition: there is a continuity in the formation of its people and an importance given to past experience;
>
> Thirdly, what Gilkey terms caritas is in the marrow of Catholicism . . . [by it Gilkey] means a sense of humanity and grace in its corporate life which overflows into a love of life, a celebration of the body, a certain tolerance for human sinfulness . . . and a sense of humor;
>
> Fourthly, Gilkey recognizes the dimension of sacramentality as special to Catholicism; that is, a conviction about the presence of God and of grace mediated through symbols in the ordinary workaday world;
>
> Finally, he observes the importance placed upon rationality: "the insistence that the divine mystery manifest in tradition and sacramental presence be insofar as possible penetrated, defended, and explicated by the most acute rational reflection."

Catholicism in Alberta must be considered as an aggregate of traditions. It is from these traditions that each child should be helped to form his or her own story. One acquires a story from the culture in which one is born which already has an image of time, of the self, of heroism, of ambition, of fulfillment.

The Catholic school, therefore, should provide material for each child to build his or her own story. In a word, the Catholic child

What Blueprints does is enable Catholic educators to work together, to inspire and nurture each other; to discover what their priorities are; to sharpen their skills in communication and planning toward spiritual objectives; to develop a coherent overall view of the deepest purpose of our schools.

Isobel Temple
Blueprints Founder

in Alberta who wishes to understand what stories he or she is living (in most instances long before he/she is clear about ultimate convictions) must be given the opportunity to reflect upon what it means to be brought up a Catholic, to be from a given social class, ethnic background, and nationality. The Catholic tradition, like all cultural forces, has a way of structuring human life. It has its own set of stories which it invites the young to live out. Through story the Catholic school has both the duty and the opportunity to invite the young to discover the Center.

Catholic schooling has failed to do this effectively because it has not offered the child a story which might command allegiance. According to Michael Novak, the consequences of such neglect are profound:

> Not to have any story to live out is to experience nothingness: the primal formlessness of human life below the threshold of narrative structuring. Why become anything at all? Does anything make any difference? Why not simply die? Or drift: which is death in life.

As indicated earlier, the record of attempts by Catholic educators in Alberta to provide pupils with stories of the Catholic tradition is not particularly good. While one can excuse some of this neglect because of the control that the Department of Education has exercised over curriculum and other school matters, it is clear that Catholic educators have shown little initiative to overcome these obstacles. Many of the early efforts concerned having certain "anti-Catholic" texts removed from the list of prescribed materials, and many of the more recent activities have centered on religious studies programs. But the wealth of the Catholic tradition, its art, music, literature, philosophy, social teachings, its activities in science and social welfare, the lives and times of saints, sinners, and ordinary people have been largely neglected in Catholic schools.

A vague hope has always existed that the Catholic tradition would somehow permeate the school's atmosphere, but when one examines the content of this vaporous stuff, one finds that it has seldom had much substance or influence. The efforts that should be assigned to this task will be considerable, and the manner of selecting and providing the material will be difficult. One surely can no longer avoid the task, however, when its need and worth are so clear.

There are considerable opportunities in such teaching subject areas as English and French, literature and language, art, music, science and social studies for references to this tradition and to its current manifestations at the local, regional, national and international level.

While one can applaud the efforts of the High School Religious Education Consortium, the danger is that this project, once implemented, will be seen as sufficient. This would be in keeping with the traditional position of the Department of Education that religious phenomena can be hived off to a single course where it can be looked after by specialists, with the remainder of the program staying the same as the one prescribed by the Department.

In the past the presence of religious communities in Catholic schools, together with the strong ethnic and religious backgrounds of charter and newly arrived groups, brought elements of the religious tradition to all aspects of the school program. This was done despite the restraints of existing curriculum, teacher training arrangements, and the lack of initiative in these areas by the hierarchy and other senior Catholic school officials. As these original sources of tradition and atmosphere have diminished considerably, new and dynamic approaches are necessary, not those that are simply banking or didactic in nature, but those that embrace the entire spectrum of teaching activities and learning experiences.

Such an approach would give each child in the Catholic school the opportunity to develop his or her own story. As Novak states, a story not only links actions; more profoundly, it links transformations:

> The line which a story follows is not straight, logical, step-by-step. It varies from life to life. Most often it zigzags as if seeking out the spot for a breakthrough. Occasionally, then, there is a leap ahead, a profound shift in perception and purpose; a new life.
>
> (Novak, p. 53)

The fourth Blueprints Conference looked "at the *transforming* role of the Catholic school, transforming as growth out of our traditional *conserving* role, transforming as an imperative of Vatican II." The hope of transformation can be realized if Catholic teachers are given the resources to aim directly at the experience, imagination, and stories of their students:

> The teacher tries to surprise students, explore their too limited patterns of expectation, raise the counter-examples that direct their attention in new ways. Good education is a constant series of new births: new ways of experiencing, perceiving, imagining, proceeding. When breakthroughs [transformations] happen frequently, education is a joy.
>
> (Novak, p. 57)

The recent Vatican document, *Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith*, affirms that "Catholic education must reflect upon the profound relationship that exists between culture and the church." Keeping in mind the transforming objective, the process of bringing the two together in our schools must begin. And Catholic educators must stop waiting for the Vatican or the Department of Education or the Faculties of Education to tell them how it should be done.

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Blueprints has provided a context for leaders to come forth; Catholic education in Alberta has never seen this before.

Ric Laplante
Blueprints Founder

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Christian Unity and Catholic Schools

Barbara Rice

In recent years, Alberta Catholic school administrators and trustees have been gathering together at Blueprints Conferences to examine the nature and goals of Catholic education. This has led, among other things, to the formulation of a Mission Statement which a number of school districts have used as a basis for stating their own particular philosophy and objectives. Concurrent with these meetings has been another collaborative project, the production of a senior high school religious education program. This provincial curriculum project has stimulated much discussion regarding what is to be taught in religious education classes and, more importantly, what adults can do to provide an authentic faith community with which young people can identify.

Emerging from these two positive ventures one detects a new sense of Catholic identity and a healthy pride on the part of those helping to form this identity. This new consciousness is generally marked by a sense of unity that is cognizant of the pluralistic nature of the church that emerged out of Vatican II. Such a sense of church is reflected in the fact that we are a little more confident in expressing our views and more respectful of new questions. This can be noted in the various ways we attempt to articulate our faith, different approaches to prayer, assuming responsibility for forming a communal church, becoming sensitive to the cultural and religious diversity present in our schools, and searching for ways to relate our faith to the personal and global dimensions of life.

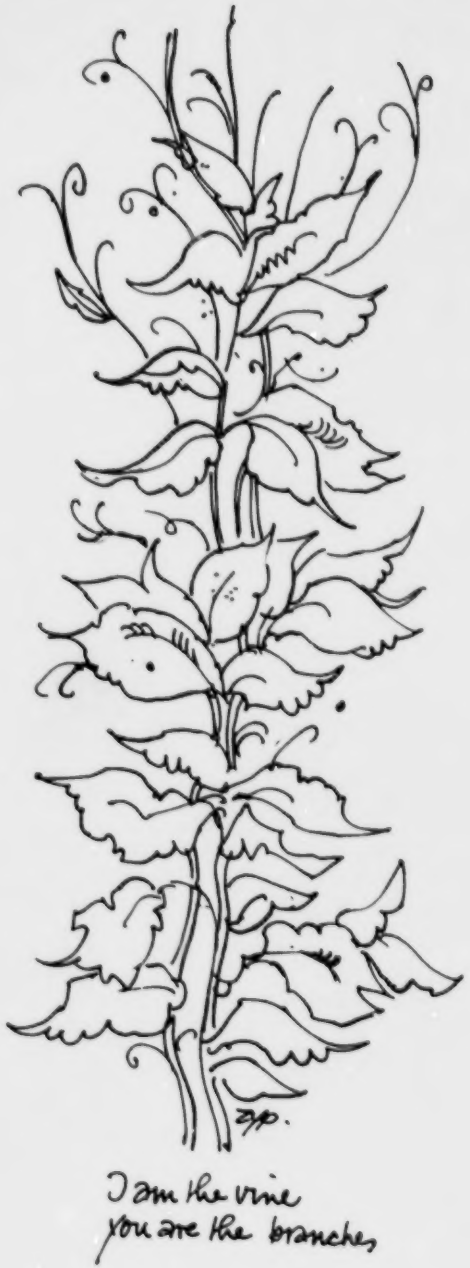
Surely all of us would agree, however Vatican II affected us, that we have been stretched out of our usual categories and our accustomed ways of thinking and acting to reconsider the vision of what it means to be a Catholic today.

There is, however, a fundamental question which needs to be addressed as we work together in revitalizing and renewing our vision: the question of Christian unity. Indeed, we must ask ourselves: does the Catholic identity that we are forming further the cause of Christian unity or serve as a stumbling block to it? This question is basic to an understanding of who we are as church, as a people claiming faith in Christ Who at the Last Supper prayed for those who would gather in His name, that their unity would be a sign for the world to believe in Him:

> May they all be one
> Father, may they be one in us,
> so you are in me and I am in you,
> so that the world may believe it was you who sent me
>
> (John 17:21-22)

It's a show of collegiality and commitment seldom seen in education.

Kevin McKinney
Blueprints Founder



At a time of renewal it is not surprising that the Catholic Church has returned to the urgency for unity among Christians. This article will explore the nature and importance of Christian unity reflected in the life and teachings of the church since Vatican II, and will offer some reflections with respect to our role as Catholic educators.

A number of documents emerging out of Vatican II reflected a new stance of the Catholic Church towards the world and the diverse peoples within it. This stance included, among other factors, an openness to society's diversity, a willingness to be analyzed, and most especially a longing to be engaged in working for peace and unity among all peoples. The opening message of the Council stated:

> As we undertake our work, therefore, we would emphasize whatever concerns the dignity of man, whatever contributes to a genuine community of peoples. . . .
>
> She (the Church) is always ready to lend aid with her whole heart to any sincere effort on behalf of peace. She strives with all her might to bring peoples together and to develop among them a mutual respect for interests and feelings.
>
> (Abbott, 1966, *Documents of Vatican II*, p. 6)

The Council, in this spirit and urged by Pope John XXIII, came to note the unity of all Christians as one of its major purposes; for it was realized that without this unity the church could not be an authentic sign to the world of God's desire for all peoples to live in peace and unity. This thought was expressed in the opening lines of the *Decree on Ecumenism* promulgated in 1964:

> Promoting the restoration of unity among all Christians is one of the chief concerns of the Second Sacred Ecumenical Synod of the Vatican. The Church established by Christ is indeed, one and unique. Yet many Christian communions present themselves to men as the true heritage of Jesus Christ. To be sure, all proclaim themelves to be disciples of the Lord, but their convictions clash and their paths diverge, as though Christ Himself were divided. Without doubt, this discord openly contradicts the will of Christ, provides a stumbling block to the world and inflicts damage on the most holy cause of proclaiming the good news to every creature.
>
> (Abbott, 1966, p. 341)

Throughout the documents of the Council, therefore, one can note that the goals set forth for renewal and reform are marked by a sensitivity to the need to relate to other Christians. For example, the *Constitution on Sacred Liturgy* states:

> It is the goal of this most sacred Council to . . . nurture whatever can contribute to the unity of all who believe in Christ;
>
> (Abbott, p. 137)

The *Decree on Ecumenism*, however, particularly expressses the thought of the Council on the nature of unity and ways to obtain it.

The desire for unity was not a new one. However, this decree marked the official entrance of the Roman Catholic Church into the dialogue on Christian unity in a manner that indicated a unique change in attitude. Up to that time it was generally supposed that the only way for unity to be obtained was for the various "dissident" Christian groups to "return to Rome." This decree indicated a more positive approach flowing from the unifying

issue of the nature of the church itself which was to be found in all the documents. Very briefly stated, this unifying issue stemmed from an understanding that the Christian Church, foundationally described as the Body of Christ, engaged a larger reality than the visible membership of the Roman Catholic tradition. Thus the door was opened for recognition of other Christian groups as "churches and ecclesial communities." This insight was accompanied by a reforming attitude that admitted responsibility for the divisions that had taken place and urged that inner reform was necessary in order to be a worthy partner for dialogue:

> Church renewal therefore has notable ecumenical importance. Already this renewal is taking place in various spheres of the Church's life . . . all these should be considered as favourable pledges and signs of ecumenical progress in the future.
>
> (Abbott, p. 351)

The effects of this decree were quickly seen in the life of the church, vis-a-vis our official attitudes to other Christians. Many negative regulations fell by the wayside. Furthermore, we were encouraged to work and pray for Christian unity:

> It is allowable, indeed desirable that Catholics should join in prayer with their separated brethren. Such prayers in common are certainly an effective means of obtaining the grace of unity. . . .
>
> We must get to know the outlook of our separated brethren. To achieve this purpose, study is of necessity required.
>
> (Abbott, p. 353)

Twenty years have elapsed since the Council, and despite the obstacles there have been many positive steps to promote the cause of unity. Many Christian denominations, including our own, have entered into official theological dialogues in an effort to understand one another's expressions of faith and pastoral practice. As a result of these dialogues, several notable documents have been published indicating that we have far more in common with respect to the core beliefs of the Christian faith than we had previously thought. One particular document formulated by a number of Christian traditions is on *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (*Lima Document*, 1982). Currently it is being studied by many Christian groups in an effort to develop a more ecumenical theology concerning these core aspects of our faith. Many Catholic dioceses have set up Ecumenical Commissions to promote understanding and action towards unity. Lastly, on a day-to-day level there are numerous examples of the efforts of Christians in praying and working together for the cause of unity within the churches and society as a whole.

In light of all the above, how do Catholic educators promote Christian unity within Catholic school districts? One particular statement from the *Decree on Ecumenism* should perhaps cause us some reflection:

> The manner and order in which Catholic belief is expressed should in no way become an obstacle to dialogue with our brethren.
>
> (Abbott, p. 354)

This directive has been taken up in ensuing catechetical documents with respect to the teaching of religious education. The apostolic

exhortation, *Catechesi Tradendae* (October, 1979) following the 1975 synod on catechesis, exhorts involvement in the ecumenical movement as "inspired by the Spirit of Jesus":

> Catechesis cannot remain aloof from this ecumenical dimension, since all the faithful are called to share, according to their capacity and place in the Church in the movement towards unity.
>
> (par. 32)

Similarly, John Paul II in his talk to religious educators in Newfoundland, September 12, 1984 stated:

> Catholic schools must hand on and reinforce a sense of community, of social concern and the acceptance of difference and diversity in pluralistic societies. While professing an institutional commitment to the word of God as proclaimed by the Catholic Church, they must inculcate an attitude of profound respect for the conscience of others and a deep desire for Christian unity.
>
> (*Canadian Catholic Review*, p. 348)

There are a number of factors to be considered here, some of which are immediate for implementation and others which will need much more discussion and research. For the more immediate aspects we might turn to a consideration of the students in our schools today. It is an empirical fact that a large majority of our students come from ecumenical marriages. Also, a significant number of parents who are not of our tradition send their children to our schools (or wish to do so) because they believe in religion as an essential dimension in education and they are aware of our more open attitudes. Can these students and their parents be "recognized" in our schools by being made to feel welcome and invited to actively participate with us in developing a truly Catholic philosophy? Obviously this can only happen when our philosophy statements and objectives reflect an ecumenical intent. In this regard it is encouraging to report that several school districts throughout the province have reformulated their non-resident policies to reflect a more positive ecumenical attitude.

Furthermore, with respect to the teaching of religion, are students—Catholic and others—helped to become aware that the core beliefs of our faith emphasized in today's religion programs are held by a number of Christian denominations besides our own? Are the common ecumenical threads of practice and understanding that are becoming evident among the churches today reflected in the way we seek to correct past historic images that distort the reasons for the divisions within Christianity; engage in inclusive language rather than the traditional exclusive labels such as non-Catholic, Protestant, mixed marriages; and actively promote experiences for our students that will help them to know other traditions better?

On an even deeper level we are perhaps challenged to consider the nature of the Catholic school itself. Can it retain its distinctiveness and still be ecumenical in intent? What would be the legal, public and moral ramifications of new directions in this area? These questions remain unanswered, but surely in fidelity to the prayer of Christ we cannot refuse at least to raise the questions.

There are of course many difficulties yet to be overcome. We cannot overlook the deep divisions and prejudices that still remain among

Blueprints forces its adherents to stand up and be counted and some Catholics fear that this might be offensive to our brethren of other faiths.

Brady Long
Conference Resource Person

our churches. Ecumenism does not call us to gloss over these differences, nor does it expect that we should become a Christian conglomerate where distinctive beliefs and practices are melded into a rigid uniformity. Nor can we fail to see the difficulties for ecumenism in a larger societal framework in which many people no longer adhere to membership in an institutional church.

Ever since the eastern and western divisions in Christianity, there have been men and women who have sought to heal the wounds of this sinful division. May we, despite the obstacles, continue to take up their commitment in our own time, searching for a response to a challenge once addressed to the Catholic Church in the 15th century by Cardinal Bessarion:

> What excuse could we find to justify our refusal to come together? What could we say in reply to God to justify our separation as brothers and sisters before Christ who has come down from heaven, taken on flesh, been crucified, to make us one and to bring us together in one fold? What could be our excuse in face of generations yet to come? What is our excuse in face of our own generation?

As Catholic educators we bear much responsibility for educating the children of this generation towards a solution of unity rather than an excuse for continued division.

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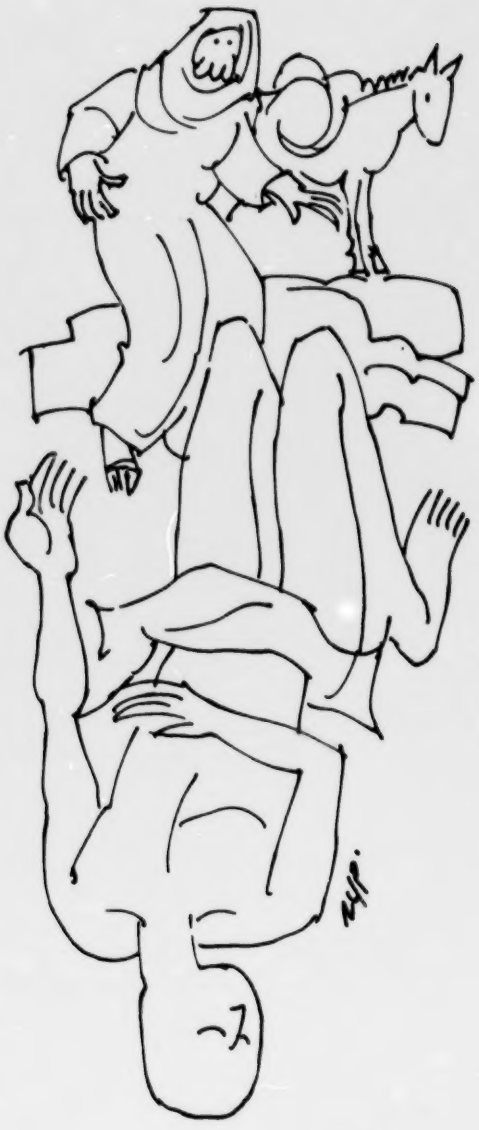

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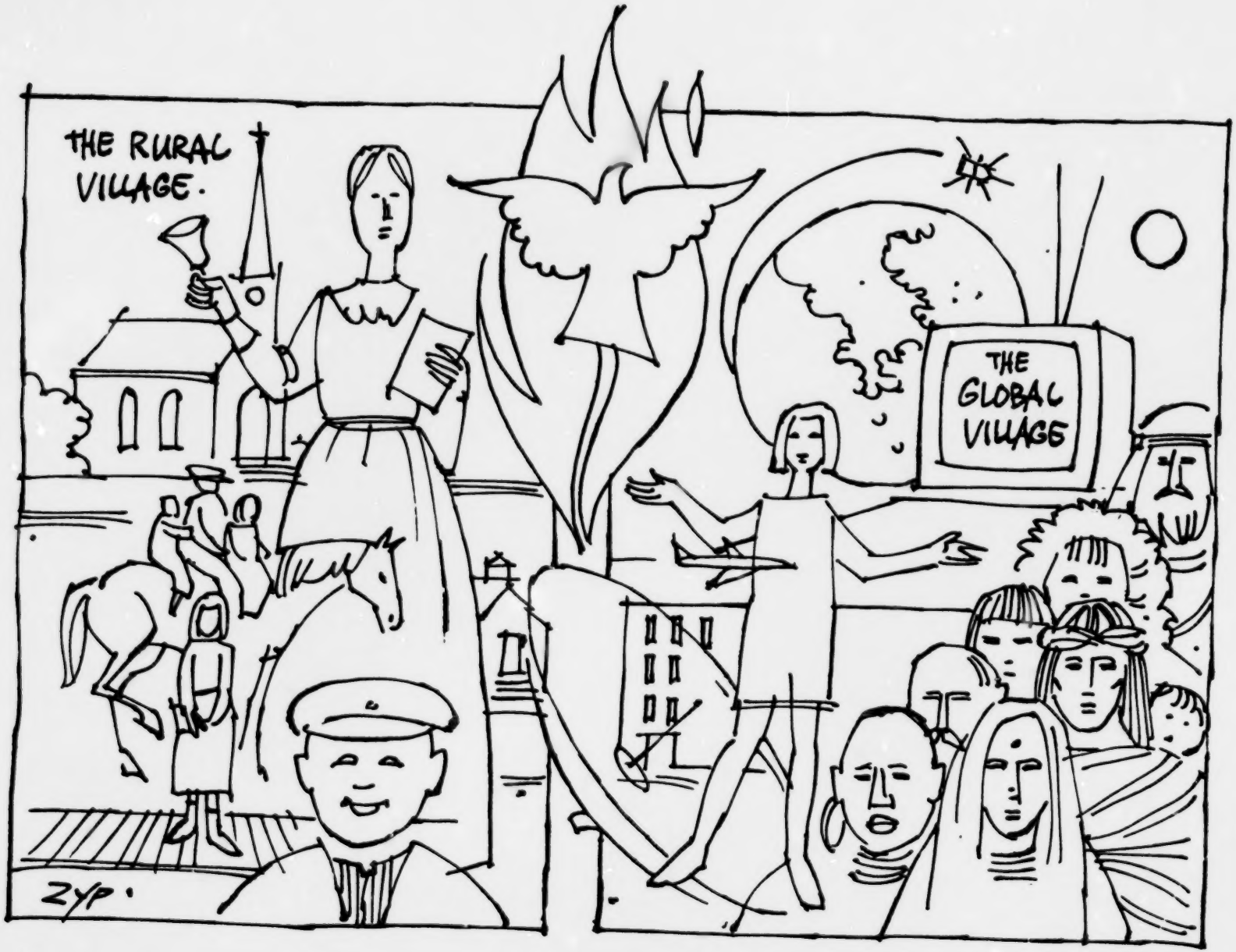
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Our Mission: What do we Believe?

Richard Laplante

Philosophy statements can be made on the basis of abstract, universal principles applied to specific areas (in this case schooling). This is a deductive process.

Philosophy statements can also be formulated on the basis of the participants' experience in the enterprise. This is an inductive process.

The following statements on the mission of Alberta's Catholic schools are an example of the latter. They evolved within the experience of Alberta Catholic school educators in the last 15 to 20 years. They have been analyzed and modified by many different Catholic school partners in the last three years.

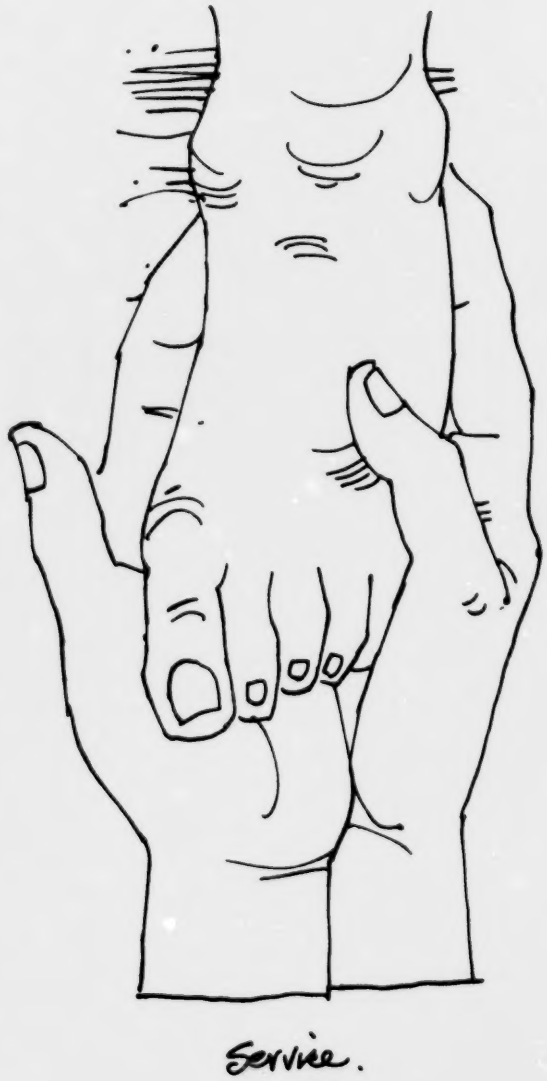
Blueprints

In the evolution of the 1970s and 1980s, Catholic school partners (parents, teachers, administrators and priests) have been taking a closer look at their collective schooling and religious experiences. This collective reflection and consciousness-raising has taken its most recent concrete form in the Alberta-wide "Blueprints Process." This process features a combination of major annual conferences with intense local activities. Its purpose is to deepen understanding and "living out" of the mission and ministry of Catholic schools in the 1980s.

In the words of the '84 participants (primarily school principals, assistants and superintendents), Blueprints has become a powerful tool for building community and profiling identity among Catholic school communities. In their words, it is:

> A reassuring experience that brings about a sense of unity and collegiality;
>
> An experience of renewal through the re-examination of roles in light of Gospel values;
>
> Of major importance is the personal growth of convincing self of value of the mission;
>
> Result—all stakeholders (parents, teachers, children) work together;
>
> We are privileged in Alberta—refocusing on Catholicity in our schools; in the past and recently we have been leaning towards public system;
>
> Together we share and are stronger;
>
> Blueprints is a process where we become stewards of the goals and objectives that are found within the good news!

Blueprints is not, then, an explicit plan like an architectural drawing. It is, rather, a movement to conserve what is perceived to be the best in our collective Alberta Catholic school experience; and it is also a search for a transforming process, to help us integrate contemporary challenges and insights into our school life.



To better understand the province-wide networking taking place among Catholic schools, it is important to understand Blueprints' community-building dimension. It is equally important historically to remember that this is the first such educational process that links all Catholic school partners in the province (trustees, parents, priests, school) across all grade levels and across all schools.

Other projects have brought some elements of the Catholic community together. Notably, the elementary grades' Canadian Catechism implementation process in the 1960s and the Senior High Religious Education Consortium Project in the 1980s are examples. The Alberta Catholic School Trustees' Association and their superintendents form two other networking groups. Yet these link only trustees and superintendents directly. It has taken until the 1980s for Catholic school partners to realize how important it is for them to work together across Alberta to achieve greater richness through each other's strengths.

Part of the Blueprints Process has involved Catholic schools giving themselves a new charter, a charter distinct from the public school secular creed. The 1981 Mission Statement (see Appendix) is the new charter, the new creedal statement of purpose for Catholic schools across Alberta.

A number of seminal ideas have emerged from the Blueprints Process. One of these is that our richness comes from our diversity, and our diversity will only find its fullness if all work for the common good. Such is the concept of pluralism.

Key related concepts are those of experience and story. It is not doctrine or content statements that bind people together, that give them hope: it is common experiences of the spirit of Jesus in and among us.

Doctrine and creeds help us articulate those experiences. Our common lived experiences bind us together inasmuch as they nurture the stories of our believing community and lead to celebrating these experiences in faith. Thus, the vital cycle of our religious lives is lived experience, told and retold in story, lived and intensified in festivity, in ritual. In this way, our religious lives are dynamic, people-centered activities. Within such an approach, faith relates far less to doctrine for its inspiration than to the presence of God in the lives of people. When this happens, a great deal of enthusiasm is unleashed, as is evident in Blueprints events.

The Blueprints Process also advances a Gospel-centered model of schools versus a simple administrative one. The vision presented is that of hope. Jesus is the Man of hope. His Gospel is one of hope. Each child, each person in a Catholic school should be "hope-ful" because each one is "gifted." The challenge of the Catholic school is to help people realize their giftedness so that their hope-ful-ness can continue growing. Ministry of one to another helps to realize and achieve this full potential for all in the Catholic school. In this scheme of things, faith is at the heart of the schooling enterprise and not just an adjunct.

Emanating out of this hopeful, ministering vision is a strong sense of collegial sharing and planning in Blueprints. Blueprints is a

"middle-out" process, not "top-down." It invites everybody's participation and "ownership." In this way, it attempts a sense of collegial responsibility where different leaders can emerge to serve the common good. This "learn by doing" approach includes effective planning which allows the richness of people's talents to emerge.

Central to this shared leadership is the recognition of local school administrators as pivotal people in the total community-building function of Catholic schools. They become overseers in the New Testament sense of the word. In turn, they must identify and nurture talent and leadership among teachers, students and parents.

As participants return to the annual Blueprints Conferences, they report an astonishing array of activities which are strengthening the primary mandate of Catholic schools: to develop wholesome students who give witness to God. "The glory of God is man fully alive" (St. Iraeneus).

Emanating from Vatican II, the new Catholic school charter which Blueprints reflects does pose some disquieting questions.

1. In what ways can faith and culture, religion and schooling continue to influence each other?
2. Do post-Vatican II students and parents regard Catholic schools as viable Catholic institutions? Are they sufficiently challenging to their publics? Are they being challenged by them?
3. Does the ecumenical thrust of the post-Vatican II Catholic Church require more recognition by the Catholic school of its responsibility towards other Christians?
4. Does the growing pluralism among Catholics necessitate more than one educational approach to the various Catholic publics? Is tolerance valued?
5. What effect does the current rate of interchurch marriages have on parental expectations and perceptions of Catholic schools?
6. Should schools move towards a greater emphasis of evangelization of students, teachers and parents?
7. Is there a growing divergence of views and practices as to who is a Catholic as defined by the "School Act" and as experienced by Catholics in their church life?

Mission Statement

The one-page Mission Statement is central to the current intense Alberta Catholic school community renewal process entitled the Blueprints Process.

The Mission Statement is a creedal statement. It is a 1980s Catholic school creed developed within the post-Vatican II Catholic school experience in Alberta. It is a statement of ideas, of what we want to become. It is a direct illustration of the prophet Joel's comment about a people being in-spired. "And afterward I will pour my spirit upon all mankind. Your sons and daughters shall prophetize, your old men shall dream dreams and your young men shall see visions" (Joel 2:28).

Given its purpose, the Mission Statement is not written in the everyday language of public education in this province. It is in a

The Mission Statement does not map out the itinerary for Catholic schools because there are many routes between where we are and where we want to be. So it's just a focus for the point of departure and something to reflect back on at any point along the way.

Chris Farthing
Conference Resource Person

Some would like to use it as a final statement rather than a working document, failing to appreciate the need to interpret, adapt and internalize it. We're lost if we can't get that across. It's the job of Blueprints to help people with this process by explaining and clarifying the Mission Statement. No two people are at the same stage in their faith development and personal growth.

Kevin Mc. Kinney

Blueprints Founder

language distinct to the Catholic tradition in the post-Vatican II Catholic Church. Words like ministry, ecumenism, collegial decision-making, faith commitment are all very common in this context. Many have found this new language difficult but rewarding. They have found that they have to keep working at this language. Yet, in the end, by using it, they become more comfortable with it. In turn, this contributes to their sense of identity and of purpose.

The Mission Statement is not brought down from on high. It was developed initially by a theologian from Newman Theological College in 1980-81. It was then analyzed and modified by Catholic school partners. It is not meant to be a proselytizing, evangelizing statement. Rather, the term "mission" was borrowed from management theory. It is simply an answer to the questions "Why does this organization exist? What is its purpose?"

By definition, then, the Mission Statement is a general statement, not a program. It is a starting point, expressing commonly held beliefs, values and practices. It should lead to goals, objectives and concrete strategies. Indeed, it has done just that for many Alberta Catholic schools in the last four years. The tree has borne much fruit. These objectives are well illustrated in the *Blueprints Profile Questionnaire* and in the *Blueprints Video*.

But, one could argue, did not Catholic schools have such individual corporate statements before 1981 and since? The answer is Yes in some cases and No in others. Where Yes, the Mission Statement comes to complement, enrich, challenge, and be challenged. Where No, the Mission Statement comes to fill a void. In all cases, it serves to bind Alberta Catholic school districts to community networking beyond the individual schools or school districts. The very fact that a Mission Statement was developed and responded to so seriously is the strongest indication of its necessity and credibility.

A number of school boards have adopted the Mission Statement as their statement of goals. Others have adopted it with modifications. Most are using it at least as a basic reference document.

It should be noted that the Mission Statement may challenge legal structures such as the School Act. For example, the new positive Catholic attitude towards other Christians contrasts with the School Act's reflection of another era where a great deal of antipathy existed between Catholics and other Christians. The Mission Statement offers the core Christian values of Jesus, His redemption, the Church's call and the Spirit's presence to revitalize the world (Nos. 1, 2, 3). These statements are more inclusive of other Christians than exclusive.

Some comments reflecting the views of stakeholders in Alberta Catholic Schools:

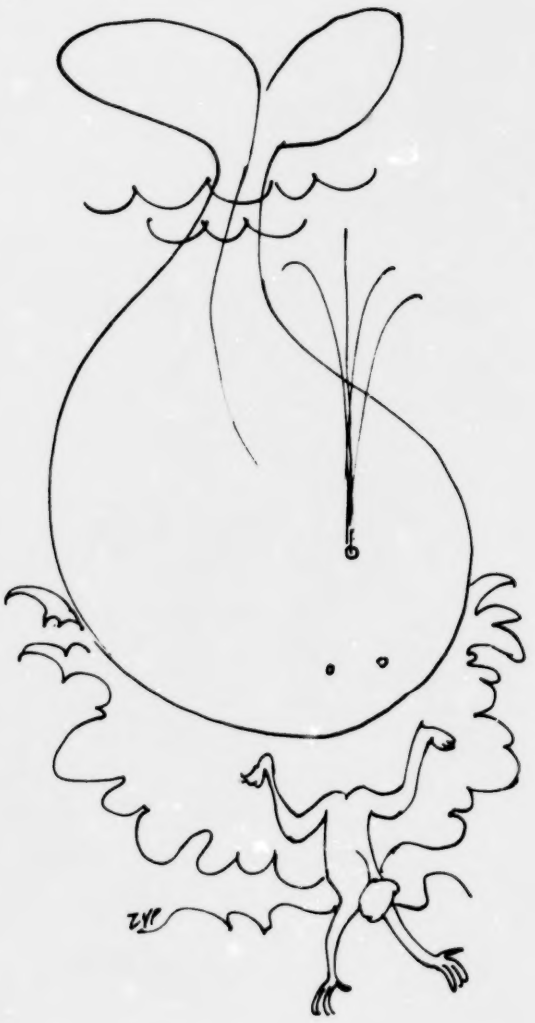
- Parents and priests have appreciated the model of the Catholic school offered by the Mission Statement as one which is Gospel-centered (Nos. 1, 2). In other words, the Alberta version of the Catholic school is not simply a publicly funded school with a dose of religion and religious education courses (No. 4). Rather, the Catholic school has to effect the synthesis of faith and culture. It has to

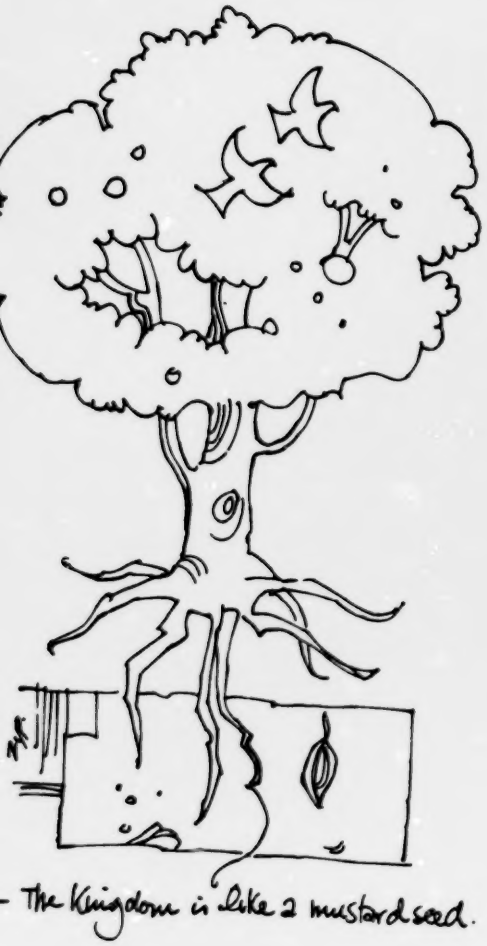
"set forth the world of sciences and humanities in its relation to religion and Christianity" (No. 5).

- Parents and priests have also appreciated the Mission Statements's recognition that the school should "complement the formation which is ideally provided in Catholic homes and parishes" (No. 4). Criticism has been addressed to the non-critical view of knowledge acquisition in No. 4. It is felt by many that knowledge must be carefully scrutinized in light of the Gospel before it can be celebrated.
- Teachers have responded well to the Mission Statement's fundamental recognition of the value of the "world of science and humanities." They also react well to the fact that education should "prepare the way of the Lord" and "direct secular educational formation towards an encounter with the world of the sacred" (No. 3).
- However, the distinction between "sacred" and "secular" which is found in No. 3 and No. 4 has been criticized. More and more, theologians prefer to perceive all of life as saved in Jesus. To repeat the distinction between sacred and secular is to perpetuate a fundamental religious dichotomy which has plagued Christianity throughout its history.

  In other words, God is present in the very midst of the learning situation. Teachers appreciate the statement: "Catholic schools cannot produce religious convictions or religious conversion, as this is a gift from God. Catholic schools can and must provide a climate conducive to religious transformation" (No. 6). The Catholic school needs to reaffirm continually that its faith commitment goals are limited.
- At the same time, teachers generally support the view that "the Catholic school nourish and promote authentic Christian living in its teachers" (No. 7). In turn, teachers become more aware that this "Christian living" or witnessing makes of their teaching a very demanding public ministry.

  Mission statement No. 7 has caused much controversy. The second part of No. 7 is often interpreted to mean that the "religious practice" of teachers does not matter. The statement's proponents would argue for just the opposite: Religious practice matters a great deal but must be supported and nourished by the faith community. The spirit of compassion must coexist with the spirit of justice.
- Administrators like the support and challenge issued to them by No. 10. Not only is the key leadership/coordinating role of administrators recognized, but their charge for community-building is well identified. They need to do this by "infusing those tasks with a unifying Christian and Catholic vision." Not the least of their leadership skills is that required to deal with both government and church officials in a responsible yet creative manner.
- Trustees agree with the emphasis on the need for Christian professional development for teacher candidates and for teachers on staff (No. 8). They are also





most satisfied with and challenged by the very broad and rich range of Catholic groups to which Catholic schools are to be sensitive (No. 9). The Mission Statement certainly does not envisage a narrow, sectarian, ghettoized version of Catholic schools.

One hopes students can respond well to the effects of the Mission Statement and the thinking which it reflects. In its best sense, a Catholic school attempts to live out the Mission Statement by offering students a vibrant and just school life, where they are fully challenged in their individual abilities and their collective sense of responsibility for our society.

Blueprints augurs well for Catholic schooling in Alberta. The Mission Statement is helping us recognize renewal from within the very faith experience and not in opposition to the public school, Protestants or anyone else. Their collective vitality should continue to lead Catholic school partners to deliver an ever richer and challenging life-centered education for their young people.

Catholic School

Catholic education has to be integrated and incarnated in the real life of schooling. What then constitutes the heart of the Alberta Catholic school? Can it be described in an appropriate manner for the 1980s and 1990s? Since Catholic schools are publicly funded, it becomes ever more imperative to satisfy the requirements of the state as well as those of the People of God.

In its fullest meaning, the Catholic school places at the heart of its educational purpose the person of Jesus Christ. He should inspire every educational and cultural action in the school's life.

The Catholic school is first of all a school. It fulfills all of the functions common to all schools. Like all schools, it has to meet Alberta Education's guidelines. Like all schools, it intends to promote the student's development towards full adulthood. But it pursues this development from a particular view of the human person and of life.

The Catholic school arose out of two historical needs identified by Catholics in Alberta's early history both before and after entering Confederation. (1) Catholics wanted to provide their children with a good, sound education so that they could be literate and compete successfully in this new frontier land. (2) Catholics wanted that education to take place from a given perspective, that of the Catholic faith.

Until recently, Catholic schools in Alberta have displayed a rather defensive stance toward public education. In fact, they were called "separate" from the "public" majority or Protestant schools.

Over the years, though, Canadian society has grown ever more tolerant of separate schools. The Canada Act of 1981 has reaffirmed their role in the Canadian mosaic. The province of Ontario decided in 1984 to extend fully funded separate schooling to the end of Grade 13. As a result of this evolution, separate schools have turned more to their own history and identity to define their purposes

rather than to do so in reaction to the Protestants, to the public school system.

Catholic schools have had to deal with the prevailing thinking in public education. This thinking has spawned various attitudes toward Catholic schools. One is that schools should be non-sectarian: in other words, they should not promote a specific religious orientation. Another is that public education should foster a homogeneous type of citizenship. Non-British groups were therefore to be assimilated as soon as possible without their linguistic, cultural and religious roots. Another attitude was that supernatural religion was untrue to human experience and institutional religion was therefore false and divisive. The fourth attitude is related: since Catholic schools were divisive, nothing beyond the strict letter of the law would be done by public officials to support them.

While there was a prevailing public school thinking that was less than supportive to Catholic schools, Catholics also had problems with public schools.

Until almost the time of Vatican II in 1961, much of the leadership for Catholic schooling emanated from the bishops, priests, and religious. This hierarchy tended to be conservative in its relationship to the world. They were also restrictive in their pronouncements regarding education. Since few of the hierarchy and other religious involved had professional background in education, they were handicapped in their discussions with public school officials.

Reflecting the defensiveness of many Catholic educators, Roman Catholics gave grudging acceptance to government standards and requirements.

A third characteristic Catholic school attitude in this period was the disregarding of the educational interest of other minority groups. Schools were either Protestant or separate; any other group really did not matter.

A fourth characteristic Catholic school attitude was that it tended to be self-serving. Typical of this attitude was the orientation towards fostering religious vocations and the conversion of Native groups.

These attitudes were entrenched throughout the early to mid-1900s, and it was only with Vatican II that Catholic schools broadened their vision.

The post-Vatican II Catholic school is one that finds its definition less by opposition to others than by an internal identity. A Catholic school includes three fundamental dimensions.

1. *An explicit and respectful presentation of the Catholic faith*: The Catholic school offers courses in religious education as well as other religious activities integrated into the students' lives. This faith presentation helps young people to discover and to deepen their moral and spiritual lives, to broaden their religious culture, to practice effectively Jesus' message of the Gospels. The faith presented is neither imposed, nor used as propaganda. Faith can only be realized in a deep respect for students and their consciences. This kind of faith seeks a free response.

2. *Priority attention to the human relations climate*: Catholic schools have always referred to the special "climate" or "atmosphere" which exists between students and teachers. In other words, in the Catholic tradition, the quality of education is directly related to the quality of human relations in the school community, the ministering that people do for and to each other. Hospitality is a very high value. Minorities are cherished.
3. *The will to educate the total person*: Catholic schools have always held to the education of the total person: the intellectual, physical, affective, social, moral, aesthetic and religious person. Therefore, its role will never be limited simply to offering courses in religious education. Catholic schools attempt to integrate issues which relate to moral and social education, to affective and sexual education, to the living of values and to developing a moral sense. Catholics try to deal explicitly with questions which relate to fundamental life options and the believer's response to God.

Catholic schools do not pretend to have a monopoly on these three dimensions. But they try to give a particular emphasis to these dimensions in a dynamically interrelated manner.

A growing realization in Catholic schools today, as in the Catholic Church generally, is of the need for greater concern for one's fellow human beings. This may take the approach of greater service in the community, more effective social justice activities or more sharing with fellow Christians.

On this point, Catholics are realizing more and more that they have a special responsibility towards fellow Christians and believers in God from other traditions. In fact, by definition, catholic means universal.

Ecumenism is no longer a luxury, but part of the Christ-given mandate "that all may be one" (John 17). This ecumenical impulse encounters significant complexities within publicly funded Catholic schools in Alberta because our legal history is based on the clear Catholic/Protestant social distinctions of 1867 and earlier. The forms of ecumenism now morally incumbent upon Catholic schools are being developed slowly and with a low profile. This conflict is illustrated particularly in how other Christians are received into Catholic schools: either as "non-Catholics," or as bearers of Christ's message who witness to their unique Christian traditions.

There exists always a noticeable gap between the vision of Catholic schools and their lived experience. As in all schools, the Catholic school ideal is never totally realized. Other factors enter into the realization of the ideal: size of school, urban-rural setting, relationship to parents and to parish, commitment of staff, quality of curriculum, economic situation.

It is particularly important to Catholic schools today to better define their goals and to develop good evaluation techniques to see how well they are approaching these goals.

In their evolution from their previous description as "separate" to their current use of "Catholic" since Vatican II, Catholic schools have enormous expectations to fulfill. These

The grass grows at different levels in different places.

Bob Schulz
Blueprints Founder

expectations are being challenged today as we enter the information age of high technology and the tremendous advances with which science challenges traditional moral and religious thinking. In a sense, though, the basic question remains: Will the Catholic school be Gospel-centered or simply a school with a religious adjunct?

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The Gospel-Centered School

Ralph Himsl

Distraught Parent: I don't know how you can help with my boy.

Ken Tratch, Principal: In St. Pat's, we never give up hope.

Introduction

Allusions to the Gospel-centered school frustrate and alarm practicing teachers and administrators. The frustration and alarm come from a history of exhortation about where Catholic schools ought to be at one extreme, with an absence of critical thinking of how to get there at the other.

The Post-Conciliar document, *The Catholic School*, came into Catholic education like fresh air into a stuffy closet. It gave general principles which stimulated educators to look to themselves for ways to make a Catholic school operate. It said, in effect, educators must bring their own good sense to bear: "Without constant reference to the Gospel and frequent encounters with Christ, the Catholic school loses its purpose." As Shakespeare might have put it, "Look to it, I charge you!"

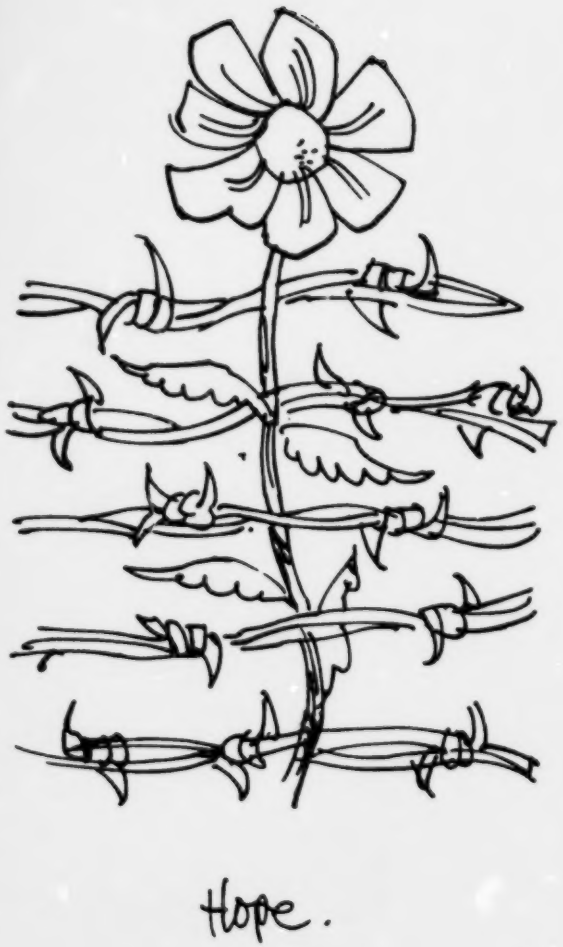
The personal nature of this charge recognizes the absence of a universally applicable theory of Catholic education or models for Catholic schools. But it also implies a hope: as Catholic school teachers and administrators free themselves to examine their work in the light of the Gospel, discovery and invention will ensue.

The Catholic school in Canada has not developed much that distinguishes it in administrative models and educational theory, because few persons have regarded it as a field of study. Universities ought to have done conceptual work on Catholic education through their faculties and the studies of their graduate students, but they have done little, although recent developments raise hopes for change. Departments of Education have carefully avoided commitment of any sort to the denominational characteristics of the schools. Administrators have not contributed to theoretical development of the Catholic school. As a result, Catholic schools have borrowed their models from studies and practice originating in the public schools, notwithstanding the claims to a distinction in purpose and a difference in basic orientation.

Not surprisingly, educators in Catholic schools have had to live with the critics' claim that they perceive scant difference between public and Catholic schools. Catholic apologists have not always succeeded in dispelling or blunting the criticism. Concepts dealing with a "Catholic" pedagogy or administration do not readily spring to mind.

The emerging attitude in the minds of Catholics was, 'Yes, we can be as good and better, because our schools can teach values. So let's stop trying to justify our existence and let's focus on internal quality.'

Kevin McKinney
Blueprints Founder



Catholic schools have few models to guide them, and almost no distinct vocabulary to express the nature of their work. The situation tempts one to speculate why the Catholic school has not attracted the attention of theorists and scholars.

A Theory of Instruction for a Catholic School

What possibility for theory and practice does reference to the Gospel raise? For starters, it indicates a bold and sure ethic, a basic premise for the school and the people working there. Reflection on the sweet discourse of St. Paul in his first letter to the Corinthians reveals it. In this familiar passage, he speaks of things that last: faith, hope and love. Meditation gives these lasting things a sense of being inextricably intertwined in operation. But as St. Paul himself showed, an examination of each element singly does not harm them.

If, as St. Paul says, faith, hope and love form an intimate relationship; and if the church, school and home form a like (though less intimate) relationship, then each of church, school and home has a concern for faith, hope and love. The church, however, has a special concern for faith; the home has a special concern for love, and the school has a particular interest in imparting hope to the children who come to it for instruction.

In this context, hope implies all that St. Paul intended: a life hereafter, a treasured life here and now, full relationships with other people and hope in oneself as rich with the gifts of the Spirit. Or, put in educational terms, hope describes the school's aim to develop each child's ability to the maximum.

Hope and the Ethic for a Catholic School

The Gospel has much to say about hope. The singular event of Easter addresses the ultimate challenge to life consigning death to death.

A Catholic school staff, referring to the Gospel, could declare this as an ethic: that they will impart hope to the children. This ethic enhances the other main concerns of the school: the opening of the child's mind to beauty, truth, and knowledge, since hope endows them with a relevance to the life of the individual.

As an ethic it ranks in nobility with those owned by other great vocations in life: the priest and minister preaching the Good News; the medical profession committed to the preservation of life and reduction of pain; the scientist and artist seeking truth; the lawyer and his learned colleagues unholding the rule of law. As an ethic, of course, it determines and informs practice; as a theoretical postulate, it leads to invention and discovery.

Teachers and schools operate now on that very ethic. An examination of their practice readily demonstrates that; however, a deliberate statement of the intent to impart hope makes the implicit explicit and the intuitive evident.

Explicit adoption of the ethic of imparting hope to children could have direct consequences in pedagogy, because teachers and schools sometimes betray their commitment to teach hope by the mischief of irony. In their desire for children to succeed, teachers may employ means which damage the child's self-image and confidence in his own abilities.

The concept of failure in school, for example, may accomplish that. Tied as they are to a belief in minimum standards of acceptability, repeated "failures" not only tell the student that he or she fails, but also that he or she is a failure. Schools fail inexcusably if they teach children that.

When teachers examine their manner of reporting student progress against the requirements posed by the ethic of imparting hope to the children, they soon discover that they can report on student progress to the student and parent without invoking the cramping notion of failure.

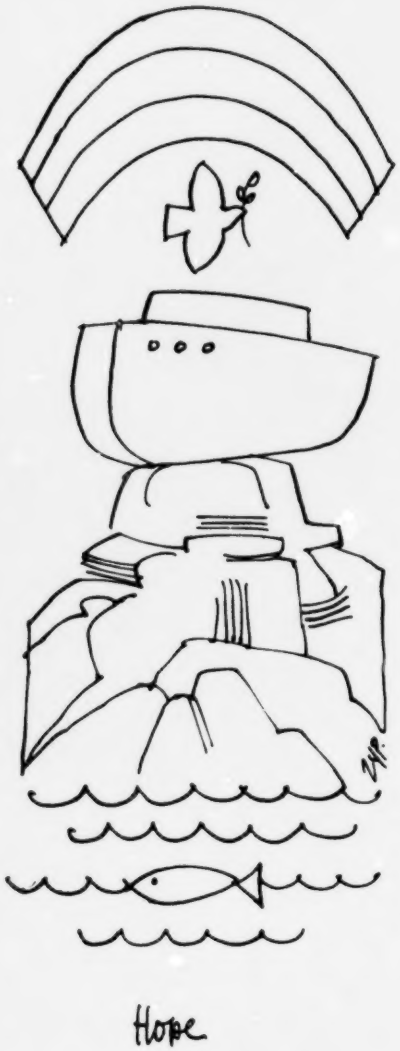
Failure as a fact of life in schools finds its justification in a long history. Part of the justification derives from the idea that fear of failure acts as a goad to children to pursue their studies. And probably it acts so, but when realized it often provokes reactions like hopelessness and diminished self-worth. In this way, the school's practice slips because, in spite of itself, it teaches hopelessness. A conscious commitment, a knowing declaration to teach children to hope, provides a check for practice.

How Do We Hope?

A teacher who would teach children about hope needs to know what characterizes the act of hoping. Or as the sage would say, "What does a person do when hoping?" We discover that by watching a person hope, and in so doing we discern five elements in the person's behavior: involvement in the moment; the expectation of more; willingness to risk; a readiness to try again; and good humor, with creativity and growth as the result.

Clearly, these elements have pedagogical consequences. For the teachers they imply methods that specifically promote these behaviors, if they would impart hope to children. For example, involvement in the moment requires the student to engage the subject at hand. In academic studies this means, among other things, the development and practice of the skills of asking questions. Teachers assure the students that they want them to ask questions, and in fact they teach their students to do so. This requires some modifications of current classroom procedures which often, in practice, permit the teacher to ask questions and the students to respond. Any class doubtless needs some of that. However, a pedagogy of hope empowers the students to ask questions.

Willingness to try again demands a supportive climate in the classroom since it implies a mistake or perhaps a goal not reached. The teacher needs a recognition of the meaning of error in the learning process. In the classroom, error does not indicate a fall from grace, but actually marks the path by which one achieves it. Or, in less theological



terms, errors show the need for learning and for teaching. If children made no mistakes, they would not require teaching. As we ensure the reign of hope in our children, teachers will recognize errors in the school as passing, and inexpensive.

In making the school, society deliberately created a sheltered environment reducing the threat of risk to the child. The school has largely succeeded in reducing physical risk. It has a poorer record in regard to psychological risk.

The teacher supports the hopeful child's willingness to try again with the ready employment of a vocabulary of hope. The hopeful vocabulary picks up immediately after the recognition of error, as the teacher encourages the child—in hope—to try again by changing the circumstances of the attempt. He or she identifies the misapplication of knowledge that led to the error, or demonstrates how a change in technique will lead to improved performance.

Hope expects more intellectual growth and increased knowledge. The teacher calls upon a repertoire of professional skills to meet this expectation. The teacher identifies growth where the child cannot see it; contrasts present performance with earlier efforts and shows the change to the student.

Good humor, the last named but most abiding quality, characterizes an individual and community in hope. Its absence signifies a descent, a slippage, a development of something new. Its waning warns of despair, and despair does not belong in a school.

False Hope and "Realism" as Inadmissible Concepts in the Catholic School

The dour sort, or perhaps more magnanimously, the more realistic persons caution, "I go along with imparting hope to children, as you say, but we must also teach children to understand what it means to be realistic and not give them false hopes."

On the surface, it appears just as ethical to apprise children of the danger of false hopes. How shall we describe the teacher who says to the child, "You can become anything you want"? It is a sweeping claim and part of the language of hope. Perhaps one might say with some safety and almost as much effect, "You never know what you can do until you try." The caution in that rephrasing, however, has just a tinge of doubt in it. In the noble act of imparting hope, doubt limps in on a crutch.

In fact, we do not know the limits of our ability, or those of our children. When we examine the realist argument against the limits of our knowledge, we discover it wanting. It may distract to cite examples, but names like Helen Keller, Leslie Lemke, and Terry Fox float upwards in the mind. More helpfully, a search of our communities reveals people who have striven in spite of grievous disabilities. Models of hope triumphant, all of them.

Perhaps Jesus, in the astounding act of the resurrection, teaches us that the full life does not permit us to entertain the concept of false hopes. The Gospel teaches hope; the world teaches realism and false hopes.

A detailed examination of the realist position and its concepts of false hope exposes its flaws for the teacher. When hope calls for total involvement in the present, the realist point of view cautions with measured participation. It keeps a guard up, holding back. Hope creates expectations of growth; the realist in us desires certainty because risking raises the possibility of failure. The realist position, for all its apparent reasonableness, stumbles on a contradiction—perhaps a lie: it tells its children to expect certainty in life, although the wisdom of the ages and all the evidence point to the contrary.

Hope tells us to try again and again. Realism says, "Try, but be sensible." Hope in action produces creativity, life and growth. Realism produces life and maintenance.

Examination of the contrast in the following chart reveals the inappropriateness of the realist position for the school, since the development of a child's potential depends on those messages which hope generates in an individual. In fact, the school must reject the position of realism as used in this argument, since the developing child goes to school to create himself and to grow without the penalty which life and realism lay on errors.

Errors, Mistakes and Hope

Unlike people in most professions, teachers take a positive view of errors and mistakes children make in the course of their learning. Or they ought to if they don't.

An error (call it disease, infection, injury) in a person catches the attention of the medical practitioner because something has gone amiss. It represents a deficiency, a malfunction in the heretofore healthy organism. An abnormality has crept into the normal. The medical profession seeks a cure or healing and a return to normality as its response to error.

To the business person, an error means an event in an enterprise which produces a loss entry in his books. In response, the business person seeks to redress the balance in subsequent transactions. Properly too, since

Contrasts of "Ethic" for a School

	Ethic for a School	**Another Ethic**
Active Principle	Hope	Practicality
Teaching Source	Gospel	"Realism"
Message 1 Reaction of Person	Total Involvement in the present	Measured Participation in the moment
Message 2 Expectation	Expectation of Growth and Life	Expectation of Conformity
Message 3	Willingness to Risk	Desire Certainty
Message 4 Commitment	Try Again	Try, but be Sensible
Result	Creativity, Life and Growth	Living and Maintaining

Figure 1

business has an entitlement to fair return; however, the lesson remains: an error in business represents a failure in business.

In law enforcement, an error means a law broken and requires the laying of a charge and punishment of a sort. Society exacts some sort of retribution of its members for laws broken. The professionals in the system identify, apprehend, charge and punish the wrongdoers. In the rule of law, an error means a deficiency in an individual's behavior. In extreme cases this becomes a deficiency in the very person, who may become a criminal. The error becomes a part of the record.

For their part, preachers have another view of error: insofar as an error means a departure from God's law or a moral teaching, they see it as a sin. Where the medical person looks to a cure as a response to error, the business person seeks to recoup his loss, the legal professionals and law enforcement officers exact a punishment and retribution for error, the preacher calls the erring to repentance.

Of course all this overdraws the real response of these professionals to error in the subject of their work. Nevertheless, the perhaps finely drawn lines help us understand the particular view which the teaching profession can have of error. The presence of error in the behavior of a child, like the presence of error in any of the areas of concern cited earlier, calls upon the professional to respond. Where the medical profession heals, the business person recovers his loss, the law enforcement officer apprehends and punishes and the preacher cries out for repentance as he grapples with error, the teacher responds according to the mandate assigned to that profession—and teaches. The child's mistake indicates ignorance; it shows that the child does not know; it declares the need for the teacher to act. In its way, the mistake becomes a welcome sign.

The teacher can look upon error with a more benign eye than other professionals, since error means a potential not realized, and the error overcome means that a child has experienced growth. The error does not mark a fall from a previously realized state of normality, lawfulness or grace. In teaching, an error has no such value-laden overtones; it has the wholesome quality of showing the possibility of improvement.

Doubtless our less than liberating view of error comes from the fact that we do not work in pristine conditions. Sometimes student errors result from things other than not knowing. Often they result from ill will, carelessness, inattention, lack of interest or immaturity. Although a broad definition of ignorance might encompass these conditions too, a teacher at times will need to act like a policeman or a judge and so apprehend a child in a misdeed, and sometimes the teacher must punish the child. But in a way, these actions represent departures from strictly defined concerns as a teacher. Insofar as an error indicates a state of ignorance, the teacher has a happy response: to teach the truth as much as he or she knows it. Notions on error borrowed from other viewpoints, or those imperatives placed on teaching by other necessities, distort the simply delightful disposition accorded teachers by their calling.

A touching irony reveals how far teachers have allowed distraction to affect their work. Teachers use a symbol, X, to mark errors their children make. Not so in other fields of endeavor. Because the intersection of two lines defines a point, it indicates a kind of truth. Our day-to-day language says it: X marks the spot. Here you will find the treasure; here you must drill the hole; here you must land your aircraft. The world has adopted the Red Cross, White Cross and Blue Cross as symbols of hope. In a larger dimension, the cross symbolizes truth itself.

Too bad we use it to mark error, as if in a perversity we had spotted a truth about our student: namely, that he or she had a weakness. A vain identification. Our symbol ought to identify the error and declare our intention to leave it behind. Perhaps an arrow would do better service, as it would indicate a disposition to recognize the mistake, and having done so, we leave it behind, because the student has learned.

The Vocabulary of Hope

Teachers have a vocabulary of hope which all use. Phrases and expressions like, "Good work. Keep it up." Or, a precious combination which Mark Gold uses in his work with the mentally disabled, "Try another way!" Teachers in the fine arts and the physical skills have refined the vocabulary of hope because their keen discernment of the skills under development enables them to see evidence of growth in the smallest things: a line drawn with a changed expression; a phrase sung with a new accomplishment; a serve made in a way the world has never seen before—or if seen, it has forgotten. Often, the more precisely the teacher applies the words, describing the changes, the greater the effect in raising the hope and self-esteem of the child.

When used with skill and persistence, the vocabulary of hope involves the subtle art of affirmation. Somewhat like praise, yet not like it, affirmation expresses appreciation for the person just for being, and the joy being brings to others. Affirmation acknowledges and recognizes the commonplace, the simple gestures and appearances that make us value the presence of another person. It requires more use by teachers, because some children rarely hear an appreciative remark or a commendation. Perhaps their achievement lacks any distinction, or they suffer the particular pains of self-consciousness. A teacher nurtures hope and self-esteem by affirmation. It has a quality peculiar to it, a perfection in complimentarity; we all need affirmation and we all can affirm. Affirmation belongs to the same family as praise and flattery; but where flattery feeds vanity, and praise acknowledges the exceptional, affirmation touches the person for the self alone. It seeks to build self-esteem.

Asking Questions and Hope

Something has gone wrong! Educational journals deal with the art of questioning, but they deal almost exclusively with development of the art by teachers. The world must count that a good work, but the journals ought to carry articles about teaching

children to ask questions.

The critics of the schools have a point. They say that we do not teach children to ask questions. Worse, they say, in schools our practices actually discourage them from asking questions. The defenders of the school place their lances on their hips and charge. "We do so teach children how to ask questions. We use the enquiry method." But if teachers want to teach children to ask questions, then they teach them how.

Teaching children how to ask questions has to do with hope. Questions open the mind to the present, one of the characteristics of the hoping mind. Like the commission of an error, the question declares the willingness of the student to receive teaching. Everyone knows of the fabled disposition of young children to ask questions. In their early unformed years, they seek to know and they learn through questions as one way. Questions are *the fingers of the mind*. When we ask questions, we create an unrest in our minds. We feel a tension that will not leave us until we receive an answer which satisfies in some way. Teachers know they have a good thing going when their classes pursue them with questions.

In most classes beyond the very early grades, teachers will have to teach the children how to ask questions. Perhaps that means not much more than teaching the children that in this school they may ask questions, because children have learned by our non-verbal cues that we need to get on with the lesson. They get the vibes, notwithstanding the epilogue to most lessons, "Are there any questions?"

A teacher can develop methodologies to enhance opportunities for students to ask questions, and so engage the moment and, by extension, hope. The teacher in introducing a new lesson, scanning the range and extent of the proposed study, says, "What questions does this bring to mind?" These questions are recorded on that ancient technological device, the blackboard. When the questions cease, as many of these questions as possible are answered in the course of the instruction. The study will not answer some questions, because some questions have no answer. Furthermore, the teacher keeps alert to the moment, because more questions will emerge as the instruction proceeds. Some require an answer immediately; others can await the development of the lesson. Some of the questions will open new ground; many will match the content planned for instruction. And some will amaze the teacher and everyone with their depth.

The teacher can use a number of simple techniques to train children to develop the skills of asking questions. In the early stages, the old parlor game, "Twenty Questions" serves well.

Students can "brainstorm" questions on a particular subject. During the brainstorm the students ask any questions that come to mind. The answers come later, as does the selection of questions which the study will address. Children can prepare a wonder book. Each day, writing in their best hand and in a special book, they date an entry which consists of a question which has occurred to them as something to wonder about. From time to time the teacher reviews the work,

examining the quality, and determines the need for instruction to develop the elegance of the questioning. At the end of the year, a child has a collection of 190 questions—quite a bit of wondering. Furthermore, by and by, the child knows the reward of it all: he finds an answer to a question and writes it in the book as carefully as he recorded the questions in the first place. Gradually, the important lesson dawns on the child: some questions have no answers, as yet; but the act of asking the question has opened the mind.

As a final illustration of simple, effective techniques available to teachers to stimulate students to question: in the upper grades, a teacher shows the students how to dispute or question the printed word. The students learn the skill of active reading. Each term the class receives the assignment of reading a book selected by the teacher, and the assignment requires the students to make marginal notations challenging statements of fact, criticizing structure, questioning arguments and authorities. In assessing the work, the teacher examines the text for the quantity and nature of the marginal notations.

All this has a rich part in the Gospel, which invites us to radical questioning. Its entire message challenges and questions the way of the world. Its intimate structure, its narratives, provoke us to ask why. We wonder at the use of parables. Why did Jesus not teach directly? He said it himself, "Seek and ye shall find." A surprisingly interesting notion, that: questioning is a Christian thing.

And teaching in a manner that nurtures hope, we can count as another.

Student Control and Discipline: A Gospel Model

The Gospels raise searching questions about student control and discipline. Catholic teaching and tradition provide some startling and useful answers.

In Matthew 18:22 we read of that encounter between Jesus and St. Peter. Peter asks Jesus how many times must he forgive a person who has offended him, and answering his own question he ventures, "seven?" But Jesus corrects him: not seven but 70 times seven. In other words, one must keep on forgiving. This suggests principles for application to student control and discipline. Like so much in the Gospels, it has a dynamic and demanding quality about it. It suggests, as does the parable of the prodigal son, that the follower of Christ might employ forgiveness as the basis on which a practice of student control and discipline in a Catholic school might stand.

Forgiveness as the chief means of bringing about student control and discipline seems, at first blush, a soft-headed way of operating a school. Somehow, it lacks the qualities that a school requires, such as firmness, rules and limits. But once again, that searching invention of the human intellect, the question, can help us, and we ask, "What do we do when we forgive? How do we forgive?"

The act of forgiving appears to include one assumption and four distinct components. First, forgiveness assumes that all people make mistakes. In fact, our language captures this assumption in a resigned sort of way in the expression "human error," a phrase

It's a very practical thing that they go home with, as well as a spiritual thing. And it's that combination that makes it work.

Bob Schulz
Blueprints Founder

which suggests a certain inevitability about this aspect of life. If this recognition of human error constitutes an understanding of the nature of our humanity, nature itself often does not allow mistakes and can inflict serious consequences on those who make them. Forget forgiveness, nature says.

The first of four constituents of forgiveness as a means of student control and discipline requires that the teacher challenge the error. For the most part, we teachers and most adults for that matter, have this skill pretty well developed. Statements of a classic kind such as "We don't do that sort of thing here at St. Trinian's," uttered with a sniff, can freeze transgressors in their tracks. Or we may use a restraining hand and an admonition not to repeat the offending act. In fact, challenging the error may well include some sort of punishment.

The second constituent in the forgiveness cycle involves the act of teaching the correct mode of behavior. "In St. Trinian's we do this sort of thing, and I shall show you how we do it. Now do that just as I have shown you."

Third in forgiveness, the teacher and the student step away from the misdemeanor itself, and the teacher affirms the student, separating the doer from the deed. The teacher rises in professionalism above vexation with the deed and reaches across the incident to the child, declaring a hope and trust in his or her goodness.

In the fourth and last part of forgiveness, the teacher forgets the incident. Of course, taken literally, that appears an impossible requirement; but the teacher acts as if the incident has quite vanished from memory.

The assumption basic to forgiveness and its four constituents yields a dazzling product for the student: a release from his transgression and, like Henry Fielding's Tom Jones, a merry willingness to engage life on its own terms once more. In short, we have returned to hope.

The Gospel sharpened our understanding of forgiveness with the challenge Jesus gave to St. Peter, and the generous actions of the father toward the prodigal son. Catholic teaching provided the model for the school's response, because the analysis of the act of forgiveness finds convincing validation in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Forgiveness says we all make mistakes. Reconciliation calls on us to identify our sins. Forgiveness and Reconciliation teach the correct way. Forgiveness may punish and Reconciliation assigns a penance. Forgiveness forgets and Reconciliation absolves. We appear to have a point-by-point correspondence. In both, the erring person leaves the encounter free of the consequences of his error except insofar as he has learned as a result of his mistake. Errors have no purpose other than to direct us towards truth.

The Gospel Model and the Institutional Model

Where the Gospel teaches forgiveness as the dynamic in student control and discipline, the institutional model says, "This organization wants accountability. People here must take responsibility for their errors." Schools differ, and certainly Gospel-centered schools

differ in this respect from many other institutions. Schools forgive and forget errors as swiftly as they can.

Forgiveness assumes that everyone will make mistakes, and it organizes its resources to deal with that assumption. Other institutions (think of the Tax Department) assume that some people will upset the system. People who follow the handbook, a sort of perfection in itself, will get along just fine. After all, "We have developed this handbook to cover every conceivable loophole. People need make no mistake." Errors probably result from some sort of ill will. The institution discerns the possibility of perfection through conformity to its rules. The Gospel says that we work with humans; get ready for mistakes.

Both models call for a challenge to error and perhaps, for the student straying from the regular norms of behavior, some sort of penalty: detention, isolation, deprivation of privileges, community service and the many other man-made tribulations with which we tax the careless, forgetful or ill-tempered.

Furthermore, the models resemble each other in that they instruct in the correct mode of behavior or conduct. "Next time you run into a situation like this, try saying, 'Excuse me' instead of 'Don't be so clumsy.' In fact, practice that right now." And other such didactics.

The Gospel model calls us to affirm the individual, giving assurances of esteem but making effective distinction between a love for the individual but not for the deed. The institutional model keeps the errant under suspicion with the reassurance that a repeat of the error will bring even more serious tribulations.

Finally, the practitioner according to the Gospel model lays the deed aside, "forgets" it. In the institutional model, the authority records the event, dates it and if necessary recalls it. The Gospel model makes bygones bygones. With the institutional model, the past can always return to the present. The Gospel model works to produce freedom in the learner; the institutional model seeks conformity.

In sum, the Gospel model looks on student control and discipline as a teaching matter; the institutional model views student control and discipline as an administrative matter.

Evaluation of Student Progress in a Catholic School

For a teacher in the Christian tradition, who sees the child as fashioned in the image and likeness of God, or who strives to see Jesus in others, the use of the expression "evaluation of student progress" has a significance.

A teacher with an eye on the Gospel uses the full expression "evaluation of student progress" instead of the shorter form, "student evaluation." Given the view of the person as "the image and likeness of God," the process of evaluation will more aptly concern itself with description of the child's growth toward the objectives the school has for him; as for the personhood of the individual, leave it to heaven.

In describing student progress through the process of evaluation, the educator deals with expectations which the community has for the process. Three aspects commonly attributed to evaluation hobble its functioning as a part of teaching. These three—marks, competition, and failure—have a close relationship.

Marks or school grades have such an association with evaluation of student progress that most educators cannot conceive of evaluation without them. Nor need they, since even at their weakest devising marks provide some information about the achievement of the student. Furthermore, most communities expect them, and the children themselves accept them as a kind of coinage. Nevertheless, school marks enjoy an overblown reputation, and thrive on it. They look definitive and accurate, and once entered into a record system, they appear objective and solid; in fact they possess no such qualities. Catholic teachers will do a service to education when they accept, and acknowledge and proclaim the largely spurious nature of school marks.

Competition among students comes as an immediate and inevitable consequence of the assignment of marks. Doubtless this spurs some students to improved achievement and performance; at the same time, it merely confirms other students in a growing recognition of their inferiority.

Finally, the fear of failure haunts the use of marks in evaluation. In extremity, the word slips from the *performance* to the *child* who becomes the failure. Recognizing the limitations of marks as descriptors of student progress enables students, parents and teachers to escape their confining qualities.

Student Control

Gospel Model

1. Acknowledges errors present in everyone
2. Challenges error
3. Instructs in correct mode
4. Affirms person
5. Principal/teacher forgets
6. Result: Freedom

Active Principle: Forgiveness

Institutional Model

1. Expects trouble from some individuals
2. Challenges error
3. Instructs in correct mode
4. Person under suspicion
5. Principal/teacher records, remembers, recalls
6. Result: Conformity

Active Principle: Accountability

Figure 2

A healthier view of marks, competitions and failure may come from another look at evaluation of student progress. A Catholic school can develop the concept of evaluation as a *celebration of learning*.[1] A Catholic school might want to consider dropping the term "evaluation of student progress" from its vocabulary and decide against doing so, because the educational community has developed a large literature on evaluation and Catholic education needs to remain in touch with it. Nevertheless, examining the idea of celebrating learning may reveal evaluation of student progress as a time for imparting hope to the students and the adults concerned about them.

In a way, schools have grasped a corner of this idea of celebration of learning in the ritual of the graduation ceremony or the commencement exercise. In this celebration, the speakers acknowlege the successes and the failures of the school career of the graduates, but they emphasize the successes and always hold out a hope for the future. It makes an attractive paradigm for the regular celebration of student growth: make sure the students and parents know the good news about student growth and achievement, and make sure they know of the potential for growth. The school seeks the development of a healthy self-concept standing four square on the strengths of the student so that he has the means of dealing with his weaknesses.

Celebration of learning has a forward look to it: it starts by recognizing accomplishment first; it identifies deficiencies second; and thirdly, celebration of learning indicates where the next phase of study will lead the student. The more precise the teacher makes the decriptions of what the child has learned; the more exactly the teacher explains what the child can learn and needs to learn; and the more clearly the teacher explains to the child and the parent what the student needs to do and what the teacher intends to do to help, the better the celebration of learning.

Current evaluative practices often fall short of this ideal, since they can make the rating the important part. People feel satisfied as long as the child receives A's, no matter what the child has learned. Of course, that overdraws the case, but the appearance (in this instance the marks) can often mask the substance (in this case the things the child has learned). Teachers who have had the instructive experience of a parent-teacher interview in which they have found themselves defending the marks assigned to a student's performance know what this means: the sound and fury whirl about the appropriateness of the mark. The essential points of what good things the child has learned, and what learning opportunities remain ahead get scarcely a touch. As a means of describing student progress, school marks get a low mark.

A Catholic school could enhance the process of evaluation by restructuring it conceptually this way: "Evaluation of student progress—the celebration of learning." When people celebrate learning, the celebration remains

[1] Celebration of learning. A view of accounting for student progress in school which recognizes what the student has learned first, then identifies what the student will learn next, and lastly explains how the teacher, student and parent work to achieve this learning.

part of the process, unlike evaluation which slips aside somewhat and makes judgments about the extent of student progress.

Conclusion

This has been an outline of some elements of a theory of instruction based on premises derived from the Gospel message.

Most schools already derive much of their action from premises contained in the Gospels. For example, most if not all schools teach their children in hope and teach them hope as well. But schools would gain in effectiveness by making this intent explicit in the form of an ethic, as the foregoing suggests.

The arguments have assumed that much of the change described and implied can take place in the present school structures. In some instances, the change suggested, as in the development of the "hope ethic," means no more than recognizing what teachers actually do all the time. Other instances, as in the implementation of the Gospel model for student control and discipline, with forgiveness as its dynamic principle, might well require meditation on its implications and continued assessment with regard to practice. Nevertheless, all of that could still occur in a school which would have the administrative structures, staff relations, student responsibilities, curriculum and other elements familiar to most of us.

Further, "constant reference to the Gospel" would undoubtedly discover new models full of promise for Catholic schools. Catholic education in Canada needs it all: research, speculation, trial and error, theorizing and writing—and hope.

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Blueprints is not 'another job' piled on already busy people. It's a new way of looking at and handling the most important job already facing us: making Catholic schools not only excellent educational institutions, but also places where the Gospel affects the way we do everything.

Isobel Temple
Blueprints Founder

Roles and Relationships in Catholic Schools

Dan Garvey

Introduction

> Since every Christian has become a new creature by rebirth of water and the Holy Spirit, so that he may be called what he truly is, a child of God, he is entitled to a Christian education. Such an education does not merely strive to foster in the human person the maturity already described. Rather, its principal aims are these; that as a baptized person is gradually introduced into a knowledge of the mystery of salvation, he may daily grow more conscious of the gift of faith which he has received; that he may be trained to conduct his personal life in righteousness and in the sanctity of truth according to his new standard of manhood.
>
> (Ephesians 4:22-44; Abbott, 1966)

Guided by the expectations and aims implied by the Vatican II documents, Catholic education has moved forward during the last 20 years, accepting and meeting challenges of establishing a Gospel-centered school.

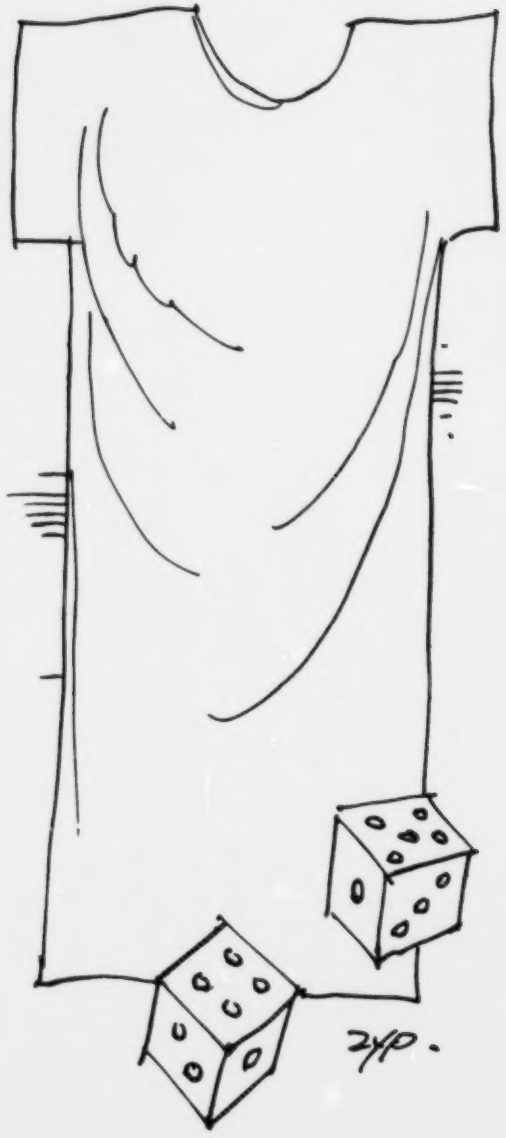
Before Vatican II, school roles were defined by the expectations of the clergy and parents through an appointed and, later, elected board. Most of the administrators were Sisters, hired and appointed on the recommendation of the Bishop (Cashman). The role of the administrator was traditional: the principal was the religious leader of the school, appointed, anointed, and extremely visible.

The lay teachers of the school system supported the religious in the operation of the school, but realized that religion was the domain of Sister or Father. Teachers taught catechism in the last half hour of the day and prepared their classes for first Friday through attendance at confession on the first Thursday.

Often lay staff had their lunches in separate staff lounges. The relationships that existed between administrators and staff were cordial but marked with definite lines. Sister was in charge of the religious life in the school and the lay teachers were there for support.

The parish complemented and supported the school. Before Alberta's boom years of the '60s, most schools were associated with one parish. The school choir sang at Sunday Mass; the students helped at the bazaars and the students canvassed for the *Western Catholic Reporter*. Distinct relationships existed between parish and school and, like administrators and teachers, each had a definite place and part to play.

Parents sent their children to Catholic schools to be taught catechism and to get a good Catholic education. The school and home were in general accord regarding the education of youth.



The fact is that priests and nuns aren't nearly the guiding force that they once were, and I suspect that is one of the reasons we need Blueprints. There isn't that intimate linkage with the Church structure that there once was in the schools.

John Burger
Conference Resource Person

The growing affluence and urbanization of the '50s and '60s led to a perceptible difference (ACSTA, *Brief to Alberta Education*, 1984). Changing values, economic conditions and media influences created societal changes which affected schools, family and the church. Each, in its relationships with the other, was shaken in its security and identity.

Home-School Relationship

> Since parents have conferred life on their children, they have a most solemn obligation to educate their offspring. Hence, parents must be acknowledged as the first and foremost educators of their children. Their role as educators is so decisive that scarcely anything can compensate for their failure in it. For it devolves on parents to create a family atmosphere so animated with love and reverence for God and men that a well-rounded personal and social development will be fostered among the children. Hence the family is the first school of those social virtues which every society needs.
>
> (Abbott, 1966)

Parents have the prime responsibility to educate their children. Before Vatican II, Catholic schools took on the responsibility of providing a sound basis in catechism in which not only answers were given, but also questions for the answers. The schools' mandate included the preparation of students for the reception of the sacraments of Penance and Holy Eucharist, in that order.

Two assumptions were made in this respect. The first: regardless of the spiritual life in the family, all Grade 1 (or 2) children were ready for these sacraments on the second Sunday in May. All children were assumed to be at the same spiritual level at the same time. The second: it was also assumed that the child would continue with the reception of the sacraments regardless of the support and reinforcement of the practice at home.

> Christian husbands and wives are cooperators in grace and witness of faith on behalf of each other, their children, and all others in their household. They are the first to communicate the faith to their children and to educate them; by word and example they train their offspring for the Christian and apostolic life. They prudently help them in the choice of their vocation and carefully promote any religious calling which they may discern in them.
>
> (Abbot, 1966)

Guided by statements made by the Second Vatican Council, the preparation for sacraments within the church took a new direction. The responsibility for the preparation of the sacraments was given back to the parents in many schools and parishes. This swing from school responsibility for preparation to family responsibility was considered a step forward. Many parents were and are, however, unprepared for this change.

Before a successful transfer of pastoral responsibility to the home can occur, the school-parish partners may wish to create a ministry to the parents of its students. We are very much aware of the needs of our students, but often we neglect the needs of the other family members who affect the lives of our students.

Teachers and administrators, living teaching as ministry, will need skills for working with these parents. Preservice and inservice training should focus not just on programs, but also on the process of ministry.

Frequently parents re-enter the church when they send their children to Grade 1 in a Catholic school. This evangelical opportunity is often missed when we don't minister to these people and welcome them back, for many are searching for a means of returning to the faith of their youth. Many parents today are the alienated youth of the '60s who were searching for their identity and story[5] immediately before and after Vatican II. The Catholic community is enhanced whenever a former member returns.

In their ministry, Catholic educators have the opportunity to work with the home and concomitantly parents must ask themselves some pointed questions.

1. Am I prepared to get involved in the religious education of my child? How?
2. Are we journeying in faith as a family?
3. Do I model faith to my child—by service to the community?
4. Do I model a prayer life to my children?
5. Are my children learning Christian values at home?
6. Do I know what is being taught to my child in high school classes?
7. Why do I send my child to a Catholic school?
8. Do we take time to be a family?

(Rice, 1981)

Questions can be asked of educators as well.

1. Are you giving Christian leadership and character training to your students?
2. Do you promote, in all the ways you can, a reflective atmosphere in the school?
3. How do you promote a Christian atmosphere in the school?
4. Are you aware of what is taught in the religious studies programs?
5. Do you give a Christian orientation to the subjects you teach?
6. Are you available to students for assistance and to parents for parent/teacher interviews?
7. Are you a witness for Christ in a Gospel-centered school?

(Rice, 1981)

Who then should be responsible for the education of the child in our Catholic schools? Should it be the parents? Should it be the school? The education of the children in our Catholic schools is the specific responsibility of the school in partnership with the home, thus enabling all people affecting the child to work together for the growth of all.

The school, then, becomes a small church. It has oneness and unity of purpose when the members of that church—parents, staff, and students—worship together, and share with one another the responsibility of the education of those entrusted to it by God. Parents and school staff, as they witness and minister to each other, model for the children they share.

Relationship of Administrators and Teachers

Before the Second Vatican Council, school administration was easier than it is today. The task was to run a "good" school. The principal carried on with the mandate given him by the School Act through board policy.

Job.
Faith in difficult times
Contrary to popular belief, suffering does not mean guilt
nor is well being equated with God's blessing.

[5]Story: the sum of a person's and/or a community's lived experiences.

There was a greater congruence between home and school regarding expectations and, therefore, less time was given to "selling the system" (Miklos, 1982).

Where Sisters and Priests were principals (in 1955, in Edmonton Catholic schools 85 percent of principals were women religious [Laplante, 1981, p. 4]) there was a direct line between church and school. These administrators were models, the witnesses, and the religious leaders. Sister was responsible for coordinating the religious program and activities in the school. Religious presence was visible and direct. There was no mistaking their role as religious leaders.

The principalship was different during this time. Participatory decision-making was in its infancy, the mass was in Latin, and the Baltimore Catechism was in place. There were clear guidelines, and role expectations were well defined. Most principals reached their positions as a result of being good teachers, strong on discipline, and highly thought of by their superiors. The principal faced few threats or challenges to his/her authority.

Vatican II documents urged many changes in both the Catholic Church and Catholic schools. Many of the members of religious orders in the schools moved on to other commitments. In 1975 fewer than five percent of principals in Edmonton Catholic schools were women religious (Laplante, 1981, p. 4.). There has also been a world-wide decline in vocations which decreased the numbers of religious in our schools. The role of religious leader then fell, in part, to the principal, a role few lay people were prepared for. Many people were confused and upset by the changes taking place in the church. Lay people were unused to participation in the new form of worship. Religion was something one practiced, not something one shared in the staff room. Two assumptions evolved. Catholic teachers were assumed to be able to teach Catholic religion, and Catholic administrators were assumed to be religious leaders in their schools and communities.

The lack of adequate preservice theological training; of clear role definitions/expectations in the changing church-school environment, and of sufficient support structures for teachers and administrators at both the local and provincial level rendered both assumptions erroneous.

Despite false assumptions from an organizational and educational perspective, the principal is ideally situated to become the religious leader within the Catholic school system. How is this leadership to be expressed?

> The distinctive purpose of Catholic schools will be realized through religion courses and the effort to create a Christian school community. Such an atmosphere will be created by school administration and teachers who have concern because of their Christian faith commitment, to carry out their responsibilities with the Gospel spirit of justice, freedom, and love. An educational pursuit of this nature, besides penetrating the entire lives of students with the spirit of Christ, promotes "the full development of the human person . . . the welfare of earthly society and the building of a world fashioned more humanly."
>
> (ACSTA, 1977, p. 7)

The educational administrator in a Gospel-centered Catholic school is called to minister

to staff and students. In evaluating teachers, the Catholic administrator reflects the teachings of Christ found in the Gospels. The administrator must truly minister to staff in ways that will bring out the best in each teacher so that they may better minister to their students. The administrator provides support for those teachers who are undergoing a personal crisis, be it in their classroom or at home. Some Catholic school jurisdictions provide counseling services for teachers and support staff who are suffering from a personal crisis.

The administrator in a Christ-centered school evaluates the discipline procedures in the school in light of the Gospel message. Discipline modeled on Christ is of a forgiving nature and aims at the positive growth of the individual, admonishing the sinner but at the same time providing positive behavior alternatives.

Pluralism has been generally discussed regarding the differences among Christian denominations and the implications of having other Christians in the Catholic school. Other Christians need to be ministered to, and we are seeing how they can enrich our own Catholic story and their own faith by being part of our school communities.

Administrators in Catholic schools must now, however, be aware of an even more intrinsic pluralism: that within each person. The administrator must realize his/her own pluralism regarding various facets of faith before he/she can appreciate the pluralism among staff, students, community and within individuals in the Catholic school community.

Without this basic understanding of the other's pluralism in relation to one's own, the occasion for conflict can arise. To be truly a minister within the Catholic school, one must recognize one's own faith journey and realize that everyone may be in a different place on the road.

Pluralism can enhance the relationships within the school, providing a fresh perspective of faith experiences. It provides for a wealth of sharing and an opportunity for growth. It provides for a variation of celebrations and liturgies, enriching our tradition and story.

The Catholic school administrator, in his/her ministry, provides for an opportunity for the continued spiritual growth of staff. The principal then becomes the needed religious leader within the Catholic school community. It is incumbent on the principal to be the "washer of the feet" in the school. It is up to the principal to serve the staff, students and community. The role of religious leader may not be to read the prayer over the intercom each morning, but to ensure that a prayer life exists and is reflected upon within the school. "Looking good" through a number of external signs is not sufficient. Only through inward conversion does a Christian community become Christ-like and Gospel-centered. The principal is the instrument to bring about that conversion.

School-Parish Relationships

A positive working relationship with the parish is necessary in any Catholic school. Father M. Duggan alluded to the changing roles and

At first teachers were apprehensive about the idea of teaching as ministry, but gradually, through inservice programs, they come to understand and feel comfortable with it. It has brought them to reflect on their role both as teacher and as a teacher in a Catholic school. It brings about a different attitude among staff members and more commitment to care for each other as colleagues.

Jim Collins

Blueprints Founder

relationships of the school and parish at Blueprints '83.

> As we try to chart within the school some kind of plan for pastoral ministry tnat has some creativity about it, it is not just dependent on one parish priest dealing one-to-one with, say, 2000 kids in the school: that can't be done. Rather, what we have to do is develop ministers within the parish. I'm sure, if we do that, the teachers within the schools will develop a stronger sense of ministry themselves. . . . If we can get close enough to them [students] and if we ourselves can develop a very practical spirituality, one that has to begin inside of us by being able to proclaim the Word of God in a very simple way; if we can develop an appreciation of God's personal love for each of them; then we are going to be functioning within the parameters of ministry within our Catholic schools.
>
> (Duggan, 1983)

Again this relationship can be viewed in terms of mission and ministry. Teachers have an obligation of being witnesses of Christ to their students—not only when Father is in the school for liturgy, but within a total social context.

Teachers are ministers within their own classes and schools. They can be con-celebrants at school celebrations or be instrumental in providing leadership in liturgies of the Word.

Liturgical celebrations are different in an elementary school setting from those in a junior high or high school setting. An elementary class may have celebrations during the day, often spontaneously. It is more difficult, but certainly not impossible, to celebrate at the junior and senior high school level. Often educators are too concerned about subject specialization. Catholic teachers trap themselves in the mind-set that only religious education teachers should be responsible for the liturgical celebrations. But all teachers must get close enough to students to develop in them a feeling for the spiritual and an appreciation of God's personal love. It cannot be left to the religion teacher or Father to do this in 40 minutes of class time on Ash Wednesday.

Rural Catholic schools find the task of establishing relationships with the parish different from that in urban Catholic schools. Rural communities usually are served by one parish and seldom more than two pastors. In cities there may be two or three parishes represented in any one school, each of which may have different expectations of what the school-parish relationship should be. There are also many instances where heavy demands are placed on parishes having a number of schools. But regardless of the external structures,

> Vatican II clarified and developed the idea of ministry in a beautiful way. The Council reminded us that we all share in the one priesthood of Christ . . . the priest and deacon through the sacrament of Holy Orders, the faithful through Baptism. The Lord Jesus . . . has made His whole Mystical Body share in the anointing by the Spirit with which He Himself has been anointed. For in Him all the faithful are made a holy and royal priesthood.
>
> *(Decree on the Ministry of Life of Priest*, No. 2)

Through our common call from Baptism,

> We are priestly people and ministry is how we exercise our priesthood . . . through ministry, we truly are a priestly people. We truly are that

> community of believers envisioned by Jesus and his apostles . . . each member with his or her own unique gifts, but all working together to continue the mission that the Father gave to Jesus, the sanctification of the world.
>
> (Liguori, *Dear Padre Bulletin*, March 1984)

Teachers as ministers rely on the parishes for spiritual support, but by celebrating and worshipping together the school will grow in spiritual life. Educators, in communion with parents and parishes, have to strive towards a full ministry in a Christ-like, Gospel-centered school within the church.

These questions remain:

1. What benefits or liabilities accrue to the contemporary Catholic school as a result of the transition from predominantly clerical to lay administration?
2. What is a good model to enhance the school/home/parish relationship?
3. What barriers militate against the teachers and principal performing ministerial roles in their schools? How might these barriers be removed?
4. What preservice and inservice activities are required to assist teachers and administrators in their ministerial roles?
5. How must the role of the administrator be redefined to provide for the increased ministerial function?
6. What strategies might improve dialogue between teachers and parents in the preparation of children for the sacraments?

Salvation as a horizontal process.
Where two or three are gathered in my Name.

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WHEXT Blueprints?

Robert A. Schulz

The word "whext" has become a Blueprints signature. It is a contraction of "what next" and was coined by Ralph Himsl, Superintendent of Lethbridge Catholic Schools. It's a useful word, implying a future orientation, even eager anticipation. It can refer to a short-term action plan. However, the word refers in this paper to a longer-term view of what could happen to Blueprints over the next decade.

At the outset, it is important to analyze two important quotes:

> For we walk by faith, not by sight.
> (2 Corinthians 5:7)
>
> I will show you my faith by my works.
> (James 2:18)

In the late 1970s, the Alberta Catholic School Trustees' Association and the Alberta Catholic Bishops agreed the ACSTA should sponsor an examination of the Catholic schools' ministry (i.e., "Where are we?"). A Mission Statement (Where do we want to go?) was drafted. A planning group of educators and theologians proposed a conference to consider not only these two questions, but also a third: "How do we get there?" They called it the Blueprints Conference, contracting its theme—Drawing Blueprints for the Future: The Mission and Ministry of the Alberta Catholic School.

Considerable faith was needed that somehow the Lord would guide Blueprints in the absence of "sight." An important aspect of this faith has been manifested in the five years of Blueprints' continued life: middle management, the school principals, are seen as the pivotal change agents. Thus Blueprints deliberately encourages a "middle-out" style of management, rather than "top-down." In itself this is highly innovative.

Although it was originally expected that Blueprints would be a "one-time event," the enthusiasm and energy of the participants, along with a desire to pursue implementation skills, ensured a Blueprints 2 in 1982 and sequels to the present—1985. Throughout, the implementation question ("How do we get there?") has implicitly raised two other considerations:

1. Whether individuals had the vision and personal spirituality to walk by faith, not by sight;
2. Whether individuals had the strength to back the faith with works, to implement Blueprints.

Managerial Process

Most people are accustomed to a somewhat standard practice of uniform, top-down

If Blueprints hadn't come along, there would certainly be schools that stood out for their Christian climate. But the across-the-province feeling I sense now wouldn't have been there.

Dan Kingdon
Conference Resource Person

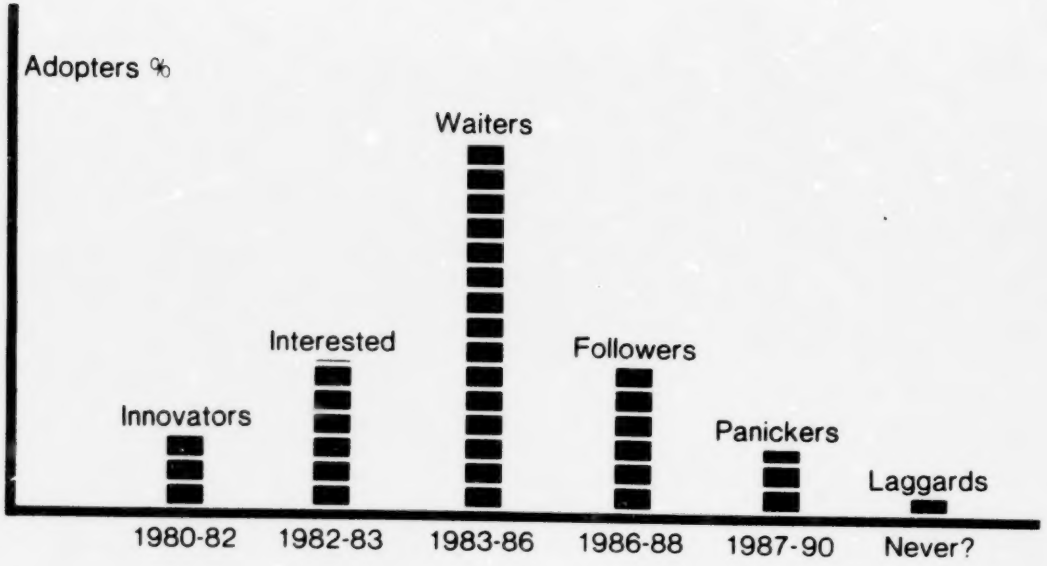


Figure 1

legislation in which everyone is expected to conform to the same rules and the same time frame.

Initially, such a process accentuates imposition of "power," which becomes "rules," usually after a period of confrontation and grudging acceptance. Such a process is inconsistent with "shared values," the basis for excellence; it in fact contributes to the destruction of excellence.

This standard process was not used for Blueprints. Rather, the analogous strategy of "letting different grass grow at different rates in different places" was used. As well, a new model for understanding the diffusion of innovation (see Figure 1) was developed by the author in order to understand the implementation process for Blueprints.

It is important to recognize that the innovation-adoption process is not a statistically "continuous" process, but more of a "cluster" which changes at approximately the same time. This model is appropriate not only for whole school jurisdictions, but also for schools within a jurisdiction. For example, it would make considerable sense for the Calgary and Edmonton school systems to encourage "pilot" schools and innovators, rather than use a strategy of "straight-line, inch ahead at the same time."

Further, it is useful to hypothesize on the likely operative phrases used by each cluster with regard to Blueprints:

Innovators — "We are going ahead, unless some authority (the trustees or bishops) tell us to stop. If so, we will figure out how

to proceed anyway. In short, we like to be pioneers, even if we 'catch an arrow' now and then."

Interested — "We would like to proceed, but have to wait for the authorities to say OK. Since we are not very creative, we don't know what to do and will have to rely on personal contacts with people who are innovators."

Waiters — "We have a wait-and-see attitude. Over the years, there have been many directives and new initiatives that have never got off the ground. We are so busy with day-to-day operations that it is best to observe for a while. Besides, in order to get anything changed, it will take a long time to reduce the system power or to develop rules and procedures on how to change. It's not such a bad approach, because we get to use some of the solutions tested by other people."

Followers — "We know the 'waiters.' When they start to move, we'll follow. Besides, by looking over our shoulder, it is easy to see that we're ahead of the laggards and the panickers. We like being followers, because it is always safer to follow the 'pack' as closely as possible."

Panickers — "We wait and wait and then panic to catch up, in order to retain our jobs and status. When authorities (superintendents, trustees, or bishops) point out that we are clearly behind the 'waiters' and 'followers,' we take anything that seems to work for other people. It is not such a bad approach because we can get everyone to work together for a quick fix."

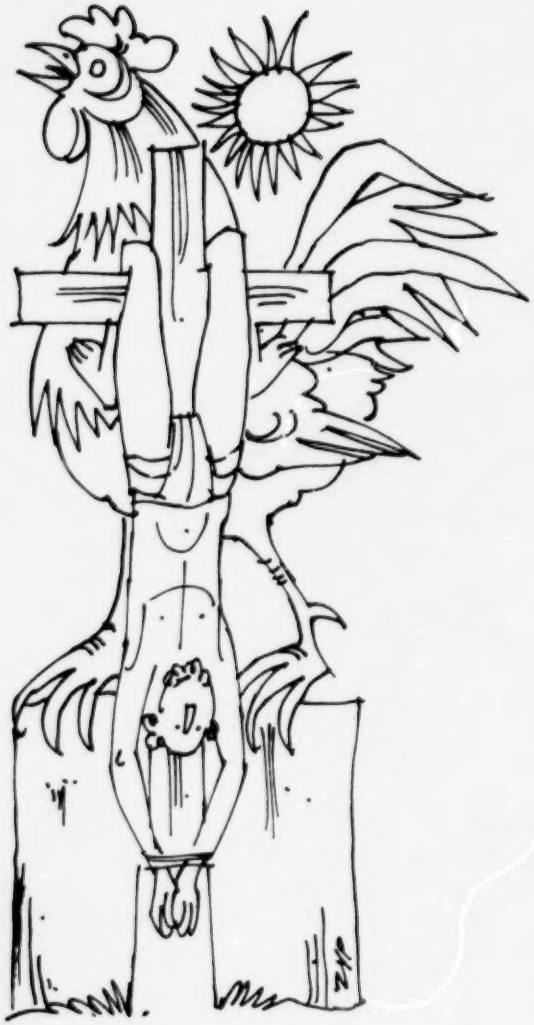
Laggards — "We are always going to be laggards. There just isn't enough money, time, or trained people to change. Woe is us, because everyone has 'more' than us."

Clearly, among the greatest strengths of Blueprints were the decisions to build on initiative (innovators), to develop specific tools (profile questionnaire, videotape and viewer's guide) for the interested principals, and to use Albertans as the resource people (reward the implementers).

Blueprints – Whext?

Over the past five years, implementation of Blueprints has proceeded with relatively little concern for the environment outside the school. A number of these have large potential impact, however, and must be addressed in the context of Blueprints:

1. The Management and Finance Plan.
2. Blueprints—concept of a foundation or roof/umbrella.
3. *In Search of Excellence* and school system development.
4. *Laborem Exercens* and trustee development.
5. Computerized policy data bank and expert systems.
6. Teacher involvement.
7. School/parent/parish linkages.
8. Requests by other provinces and countries.
9. Burnout/stress and time management.
10. Alberta economy.
11. Possible School Act changes.
12. Teacher-Board negotiations.



The high cost of discipleship.

13. Possible lawsuits.

Management and Finance Plan

Alberta Education introduced the Management and Finance Plan in 1984-85, and it presents some interesting problems and opportunities for Blueprints over the next five years.

Initially, the amount of administrative time and energy required for MFP may reduce alternative time needed for Blueprints implementation. For example, it is likely that the time required for MFP will increase in the next five years as the phases of measurement, evaluation, and performance correction follow the policy development phase. Further, it is likely that Alberta Education will eventually require policy development for other aspects of the school system than management and finance.

The innovators and interested will find the time to continue implementation of Blueprints. However, the waiters, followers, panickers and laggards may substitute MFP for Blueprints.

Interestingly, MFP itself presupposes development of a Mission Statement, goals, and objectives in order to properly implement policies and evaluate results. Therefore, it is likely that sooner or later all Catholic school jurisdictions will adopt a Mission Statement, motivated by one or more of the following:

1. Insight by principals, the superintendent, and/or trustees;
2. Concern by principals, the superintendent, and/or trustees that other ACSTA schools are "getting ahead of us";
3. Alberta Education requirements.

Blueprints—A Foundation or a Roof/Umbrella

Even after five years, there are still many people who pigeon-hole Blueprints as a separate component of school life. Given the philosophical foundation (which can also be viewed as a roof or an umbrella), an administrative—if not a spiritual—breakthrough will occur when the following question is asked: "Is there *anything* that we (a school) are doing, or should be doing, that does *not* fit into Blueprints?" One approach to answering this question is to fit all the positive ("good") aspects and current action plans in a school and a school system into the Blueprints profile questionnaire.* If anything does not fit, then changes are needed in the questionnaire. Eventually it is likely that all Catholic school administrators will see that integration of MFP into a Blueprints foundation will save a great deal of time, in addition to the positive integrative aspects for principals, teachers, and students.

In Search of Excellence and School System Development

The book *In Search of Excellence* includes

*A questionnaire designed to help a school staff collate their current perceptions of their schools's religious life, analyze its strengths and weaknesses, and identify priorities for action

many administrative insights which can help implement various aspects of Blueprints. In particular, the emphasis on shared values, upward communication, people-orientation, decreased power, and decreased "rules" are all consistent with Blueprints.

Further, it is likely that implementation of MFP evaluation requirements will be enhanced by communication from teachers. The *content* of the Blueprints profile questionnaire does this, but an "excellence" perspective in terms of *process* could be very useful as a training/administrative focus for principals.

Laborem Exercens and Trustee Development

John Paul II's encyclical On Human Work, *Laborem Exercens*, could be useful for adding spiritual perspectives into the traditional confrontation between trustees (management) and teachers (labor/unions). In the long run, Blueprints implementation will depend on the quality of trustee-teacher relations. As well, it will be useful for trustees to read, reflect upon, and have group discussions about the book, *Servant Leadership*.

Computerized Policy Data Bank and Expert Systems

The computerized policy data bank, a compilation of the policies of all ACSTA member boards, provides two types of opportunities for Blueprints implementation: First, use of the policy data bank will save time for policy makers and related committees. Second, the policy data bank provides a most extraordinary tool to help implement Blueprints: computerized networking of principals ("expert systems").

In the past five years, principals have had to rely on sporadic contacts with others in order to implement Blueprints. Despite the intentions of superintendents and Blueprints innovators, many good ideas and action plans have languished in minute books, file cabinets or memories, instead of being widely shared.

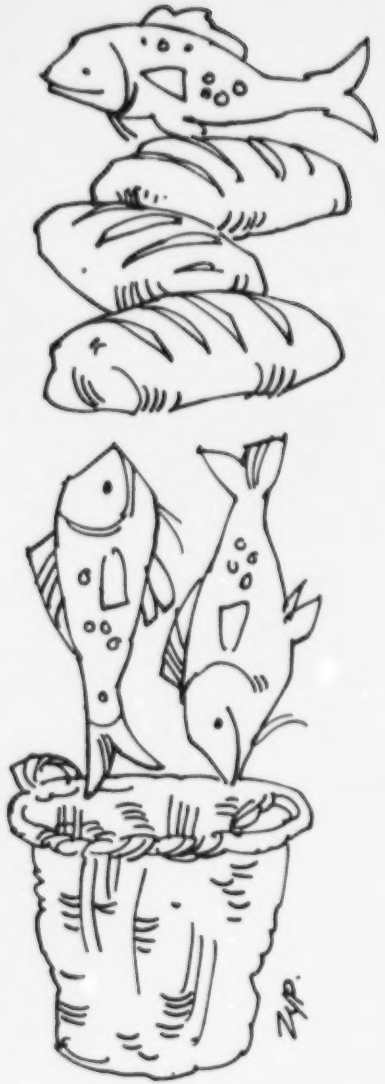
Computer links between principals will facilitate:

1. Appreciation of an Alberta-wide Catholic community;
2. Access to good ideas and action plans for implementing Blueprints;
3. A speedy mechanism to form ad hoc committees of principals interested in development of a particular topic;
4. An easy way for principals to ask questions of peers and locate answers to day-to-day situations.

Creation of a central Blueprints data bank will not be that difficult technically; the Blueprints School Profile Questionnaire already provides the basic structure for documenting principals' many areas of concern.

Teacher Involvement

Blueprints was designed as a "middle-out" process, and stronger efforts must be made to include teachers in the process. For example,



Sharing
The Miraculous Multiplication

it would seem logical to help teachers:

1. Recognize that *everything* in the school is built on a Blueprints foundation or comes under a Blueprints roof;
2. Have access to a computerized data bank of ideas and action plans;
3. Take greater leadership in implementing Blueprints;
4. Have Blueprints components for annual meetings and professional days.

School/Parent/Parish Linkages

Five years ago, most Alberta Catholics probably thought that the spiritual life of schools would be influenced mainly by parishes, through the parents. Now it seems much more likely that parishes will be influenced by the spiritual development of children in the schools, through the parents.

Considerable effort is needed by the schools to develop parent linkages. This process will likely be speeded through the evaluation pressures of MFP. Rather than reinvent the wheel, it would be wise to review the Parent Report Card developed by Fort McMurray and also used by North Central.

With regard to parish linkages, the aging of priests will become evident by 1990. For example, between 1990 and 1994, approximately 50 percent of the priests in the Calgary diocese will celebrate their sixty-fifth birthday and expect to retire. Further, the increased time demands of marriage counseling and other similar duties mean that priests have less and less time to spend in schools. With fewer priests, each able to spend less time in schools, it is clear Catholic schools will become the training ground for a new generation of spiritual leaders in Alberta.

However, only Edmonton (with Newman Theological College) has ready access to many well-qualified people who can train teachers in spiritual areas. Therefore, it is likely that closed circuit television may be required in order to bring the teachers and spiritual guides together.

Requests from other Provinces and Countries

Alberta is blessed by full public funding for Catholic schools. While efforts will continue to ensure equal funding per student, it is also true that few other areas of the world can afford full-time, well-qualified superintendents, principals, teachers and support staff for Catholic education.

Partly because of Alberta Catholic schools' fortunate public funding situation, they probably should take a strong leadership role in sharing the Blueprints experiences, process, and results with other provinces and other countries, particularly the United States. It is important to recognize that the parochial school systems of many of these other regions will be devastated economically, administratively, and spiritually by substantial retirements of priests and nuns in the next 10 years.

However, other parts of the world have strengths to share as well. Therefore, it will be increasingly useful for ACSTA to support contacts with these distant colleagues. It is

entirely possible that Alberta will be the world leader in Catholic education if change continues at the same rate for the next decade as in the past five years.

Burnout/Stress and Time Management

The plethora of opportunities for furthering Blueprints implementation underscores the related problems of burnout and stress. Whereas many people "rust out" from lack of innovation and energy, there are some select leaders who are constantly in demand to help others. These few people are candidates for burnout due to over-commitment. Increasingly, it will become evident that new leaders must emerge, while experienced leaders are available more "on tape."

Better time management skills are required to minimize in schools the great time-wasters common to virtually every organization: interruptions, telephone calls, meetings and procrastination. The foregoing nine external elements affecting Blueprints implementation over the next five to 10 years provide actual opportunities, and are somewhat under our control. However, there are potential uncontrollable problems which could sabotage the outstanding efforts of many people.

Alberta Economy

Alberta's Catholic schools are linked to tax revenues, which could falter if the Alberta economy falters. If the world price for oil and gas decline another 10 percent, the entire educational system in Alberta could reach the crisis state of neighboring British Columbia.

Possible School Act Changes

Alberta's Catholic schools were legislated before Alberta joined the Canadian confederation; they are safeguarded in law and by tradition.

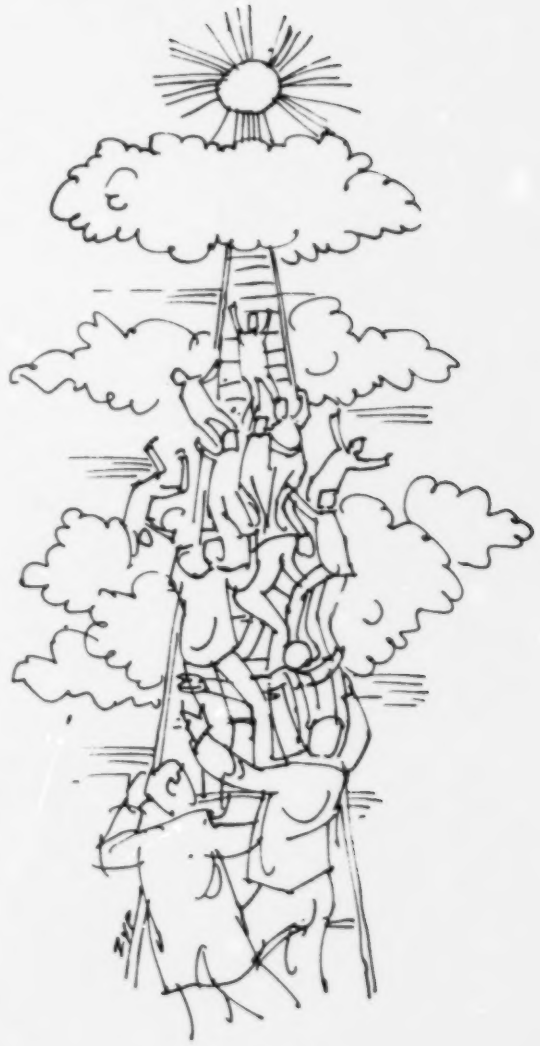
However, history and tradition are no longer treated with great respect by many people. Therefore, a number of Albertans could consider the historical precedent of Catholic schools as irrelevant.

So it is vital that the ACSTA continue to promote the Catholic school as a community of people in a building, rather than a building with an "extra" class in religion.

The need for vigilance relates to revision of the School Act as well. Recent political events in Alberta and Ontario education demonstrate how dramatically and quickly traditions and practices can be overturned.

Teacher-Board Negotiations

The quickest method to undermine Blueprints is for a small majority of trustees on a board to take a strong adversary position against the teachers. The second quickest method to undermine Blueprints is for a small group of teachers to take a strong adversary position against the board. Subjective perceptions, rumors, and innuendo are usually more important than facts. Staff room gossip or media misquotes can generate fast and often permanent deterioration of teacher morale.



Possible Lawsuits

Lawsuits are "black holes" which can absorb extraordinary amounts of time, morale, and energy for Catholic school administrators. In particular, Blueprints could be slowed by just a few lawsuits involving one or more of the following:

1. Non-Catholics who pay taxes and want to stand for trustee election;
2. Election of a non-Catholic to a separate school board;
3. Legal challenges to Catholic schools by a group similar to the anti-Logos forces;
4. Teachers who have been terminated due to "non-Catholic" practices;
5. Non-Catholic students who want to attend Catholic schools, but opt out of religious education;
6. Potential teachers not hired because of preference ("discrimination"?) for "better Catholic" teachers.

Summary

The next 10 years of Blueprints will likely see a growing appreciation of the following:

> But are you willing to recognize, you foolish person, that faith without works is useless?
>
> (James 2.17)

> From those to whom much is given, much is expected.
>
> (Luke 12:48)

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Mission Statement

1. Jesus Christ came to reveal the true identity of humanity as a people saved from its sin of rejecting God—a people who can discover its full identity only by responding to God's voice. Any authentic concern for humanity then is profoundly religious, just as any authentic concern for religion is profoundly humanistic.
2. The work of the Christian Church is to help humanity discover its proper identity as called to God in Christ by the Spirit—a call demanding either rejection or acceptance.
3. Catholic schools exist as that dimension of the Church concerned with directing secular educational formation towards an encounter with this world of the sacred. This means providing an education that prepares the way of the Lord, that opens up secular learning to its relationship with God's saving call in Christ and in Christian history.
4. Catholic schools, then, help children learn about themselves and their world in relation to God—a relation embodied in the life and message of Christ Jesus and in the community bearing the name Christian. It follows that Catholic schools complement the formation which is ideally provided in Catholic homes and parishes: for inasmuch as it is the school that structures and teaches the wealth of human knowledge and practice, so it is the Catholic school that can best teach children to reflect on and celebrate the religious meaning of that knowledge and practice.
5. Accordingly, the Catholic school is needed, not just to provide classes specifically in religion and Christianity, but more importantly to set forth the world of the sciences and humanities in its relation to religion and Christianity.
6. Catholic schools cannot produce religious convictions or religious conversion, as this is a gift of love from God alone. But Catholic schools can and must provide a climate conducive to religious transformation, by encouraging colleagues and students to express their religious convictions openly in a manner that unites thinking and feeling.
7. To accomplish this, teachers in Catholic schools should know and live the religious dimension of the secular world, if they are to communicate that dimension in the classroom. This does not mean, however, that the religious practice of teachers must be in all cases the governing norm of employment in Catholic schools. It is of even greater importance that the Catholic school nourish and promote authentic Christian living in its teachers. In turn, teachers are aware their educational ministry already gives them an active role in Catholic parish life.
8. To meet the purpose of Catholic education in our own day, there is need of including the religious and Christian dimensions of humanity in teacher-training programs at universities and colleges, just as there is need of continuing religious education for teachers already in the schools.
9. Catholic education should be highly diversified, sensitive to the changing needs of various racial, ethnic, and economic groups. Every effort should be made to introduce community and neighborhood programs that embody the specifically Catholic dimension of childhood and adult education. The heritage and purpose of Catholic schools in Alberta should itself become a topic for discussion in school programs.
10. Catholic school administrators exercise a responsibility, not only in relation to government policy-makers and to the Bishops of Alberta, but also in relation to Catholic parents and children. As educational leaders, administrators have the task of coordinating the many diverse tasks demanded by education, and of building community by infusing those tasks with a unifying Christian and Catholic vision.

The first commandment.

Contributors

Bob Carney—Dr. Carney is currently Professor and Chairman of the Department of Educational Foundations, University of Alberta. He was formerly a school superintendent in the Northwest Territories, Executive Director of the Alberta Catholic School Trustees' Association and Deputy Minister, Department of Recreation, Parks and Wildlife, Government of Alberta.

A longstanding interest in Catholic schooling in Alberta prompted Dr. Carney to become involved in the Blueprints Reader Committee.

Dan Garvey—Since 1980, Mr. Garvey has been Vice-Principal of St. Mary School (K-12) in the one-school system of the Westlock RCSSD No. 110. He holds a BEd and an MEd in educational administration.

"I wanted to become involved in this project for the purpose of researching an individual project for my graduate studies. However, the more I got involved, the more I realized that the academic benefits were outweighed by the affective benefits derived from the group process. In retrospect, my participation in the Blueprints Reader Committee provided me with an opportunity to stretch my mind and to reaffirm my perceptions of Catholic education."

Ralph Himsl—Mr. Himsl presently serves as Superintendent of Catholic Schools in Lethbridge, Alberta, and has done so since 1973. Formerly he was a teacher and superintendent in Saskatchewan. He counts among his accomplishments production of a Life Skills Training Manual and the development of programs to train socially handicapped adults to enter the work force. Mr. Himsl holds an honorary life membership in the Alberta Catholic School Trustees' Association and served on the Alberta Government Committee on Tolerance and Understanding.

"I joined this project because of the stimulation received at the Blueprints Conferences of the past five years and because of my belief that we need ideas about Catholic education and these ideas need maximum exposure."

Ric Laplante—Presently Director of Planning with Edmonton Catholic Schools, Mr. Laplante graduated Summa Cum Laude from the University of Montreal with a Bachelor of Theology, received his BEd from the University of Alberta and an MRE from Loyola University, Chicago.

"I like to write, but it was the networking, the opportunity to join other Catholic educators in a common project that sparked my

involvement in this first Blueprints Reader. I am satisfied at having made a contribution to this evolving Catholic school literature."

Brady Long—Principal of the one-school Assumption RCSSD No. 50 in Oyen, Mr. Long holds a BA and a Certificate in Education. Prior to his Alberta experience, he was active in theatre arts and fitness training in Canada and Australia.

"When we were born, God gave us two ears, two eyes and a mouth. In His infinite wisdom, He knew that we should look and listen twice as much as we speak! Eighteen months ago, I decided to look at and listen to the Blueprints Reader Committee. My motivation for doing so was selfish—I wanted to discover as much as I could about Alberta Catholic education in as short a time as possible. My reward is being allowed to contribute to a book which I believe is needed, not only in the Catholic schools of Alberta, but in all Catholic schools."

Barbara Rice—Presently on secondment from the Edmonton Catholic School system, Sister Barbara is working as the Director of the Bachelor of Religious Education program at Newman Theological College, Edmonton. She holds a BEd, an MRE and an MA in theology.

"My interest in the Blueprints Reader Committee came out of my studies in the area of theology and ecumenism. I wanted to know how our Catholic schools are working toward Christian unity, and I'm happy with the chance to write on that area."

Bob Schulz—A professor in the Faculty of Management at the University of Calgary since 1973, Dr. Schulz was educated in the United States. With expertise in mathematics, engineering and business administration, his special interests are process and policy development.

Those special interests involved Dr. Schulz with Blueprints in the first place. It is only natural that he felt compelled to write about the process aspects of Blueprints; those aspects that make it work, and to speculate on what developments will occur in the future.

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